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THE

WORKS

OF

Samuel Johnſon, LL.D.

A NEW EDITION,

IN TWELVE VOLUMES.

WITH

AN ESSAY ON HIS LIFE AND GENIUS,

BY ARTHUR MURPHY, ESQ.

VOLUME THE NINTH.

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COWLEY.

THE Life of Cowley, notwithſtanding the penury of Engliſh biography, has been written by Dr. Sprat, an author whoſe pregnancy of imagination and elegance of language have deſervedly ſet him high in the ranks of literature; but his zeal of friendſhip, or ambition of eloquence, has produced a funeral oration rather than a hiſtory: he has given the character, not the life, of Cowley; for he writes with ſo little detail, that ſcarcely any thing is diſtinctly known, but all is ſhewn confuſed and enlarged through the miſt of panegyrick.

ABRAHAM COWLEY was born in the year one thouſand ſix hundred and eighteen. His father was a grocer, whoſe condition Dr. Sprat conceals under the general appellation of a citizen; and, what would probably not have been leſs carefully ſuppreſſed, the omiſſion of his name in the regiſter of St. Dunſtan's pariſh gives reaſon to ſuſpect that his father was a ſectary. Whoever he was, he died before the birth of his ſon, and conſequently left him to the care of his mother; whom Wood repre-

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ſents as ſtruggling earneſtly to procure him a literary education, and who, as ſhe lived to the age of eighty, had her ſolicitude rewarded by ſeeing her ſon eminent, and, I hope, by ſeeing him fortunate, and partaking his proſperity. We know at leaſt, from Sprat's account, that he always acknowledged her care, and juſtly paid the dues of filial gratitude.

In the window of his mother's apartment lay Spencers' Fairy Queen; in which he very early took delight to read, till, by feeling the charms of verſe, he became, as he relates, irrecoverably a poet. Such are the accidents which, ſometimes remembered, and perhaps ſometimes forgotten, produce that particular deſignation of mind, and propenſity for ſome certain ſcience or employment, which is commonly called Genius. The true Genius is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to ſome particular direction. Sir Joſhua Reynolds, the great Painter of the preſent age, had the firſt fondneſs for his art excited by the peruſal of Richardſon's treatiſe.

By his mother's ſolicitation he was admitted into Weſtminſter-ſchool, where he was ſoon diſtinguiſhed. He was wont, ſays Sprat, to relate, "That he had "this defect in his memory at that time, that his "teachers never could bring it to retain the ordinary "rules of grammar."

This is an inſtance of the natural deſire of man to propagate a wonder. It is ſurely very difficult to tell any thing as it was heard, when Sprat could not refrain from amplifying a commodious incident, though the book to which he prefixed his narrative contained its confutation. A memory admitting ſome

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ſome things, and rejecting others, an intellectual digeſtion that concocted the pulp of learning, but refuſed the huſks, had the appearance of an inſtinctive elegance, of a particular proviſion made by Nature for literary politeneſs. But in the author's own honeſt relation, the marvel vaniſhes: he was, he ſays, ſuch "an enemy to all conſtraint, that his "maſter never could prevail on him to learn the "rules without book." He does not tell that he could not learn the rules, but that, being able to perform his exerciſes without them, and being an "enemy to conſtraint," he ſpared himſelf the labour.

Among the Engliſh poets, Cowley, Milton, and Pope, might be ſaid "to liſp in numbers;" and have given ſuch early proofs, not only of powers of language, but of comprehenſion of things, as to more tardy minds ſeem ſcarcely credible. But of the learned puerilities of Cowley there is no doubt, ſince a volume of his poems was not only written, but printed in his thirteenth year*; containing, with other poetical compoſitions, "The tragical "Hiſtory of Pyramus and Thiſbe," written when he was ten years old; and "Conſtantia and Philetus," written two years after.

While he was yet at ſchool he produced a comedy called "Love's Riddle," though it was not publiſhed till he had been ſome time at Cambridge. This comedy is of the paſtoral kind, which requires no acquaintance with the living world, and therefore

* This volume was not publiſhed before 1633, when Cowley was fifteen years old. Dr. Johnſon, as well as former Biographers, ſeems to have been miſled by the portrait of Cowley being by miſtake marked with the age of thirteen years. R.

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the time at which it was composed adds little to the wonders of Cowley's minority.

In 1636, he was removed to Cambridge *, where he continued his studies with great intenseness; for he is said to have written, while he was yet a young student, the greater part of his "Davideis;" a work of which the materials could not have been collected without the study of many years, but by a mind of the greatest vigour and activity.

Two years after his settlement at Cambridge he published "Love's Riddle," with a poetical dedication to Sir Kenelm Digby; of whose acquaintance all his contemporaries seem to have been ambitious; and "Naufragium Joculare," a comedy written in Latin, but without due attention to the ancient models; for it is not loose verse, but mere prose. It was printed, with a dedication in verse, to Dr. Comber, master of the college; but, having neither the facility of a popular nor the accuracy of a learned work, it seems to be now universally neglected.

At the beginning of the civil war, as the Prince passed through Cambridge in his way to York, he was entertained with a representation of the "Guar-"dian," a comedy, which Cowley says was neither written nor acted, but rough-drawn by him, and repeated by the scholars. That this comedy was printed during his absence from his country, he appears to have considered as injurious to his reputation; though, during the suppression of the

* He was a candidate this year at Westminster-school for election to Trinity-college, but proved unsuccessful. N.

theatres,

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theatres, it was ſometimes privately acted with ſufficient approbation.

In 1643, being now maſter of arts, he was, by the prevalence of the parliament, ejected from Cambridge, and ſheltered himſelf at St. John's College in Oxford; where, as is ſaid by Wood, he publiſhed a ſatire, called "The Puritan and Papiſt," which was only inſerted in the laſt collection of his works*; and ſo diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the warmth of his loyalty and the elegance of his converſation, that he gained the kindneſs and confidence of thoſe who attended the King, and amongſt others of Lord Falkland, whoſe notice caſt a luſtre on all to whom it was extended.

About the time when Oxford was ſurrendered to the parliament, he followed the Queen to Paris, where he became ſecretary to the Lord Jermyn, afterwards Earl of St. Albans, and was employed in ſuch correſpondence as the royal cauſe required, and particularly in cyphering and decyphering the letters that paſſed between the King and Queen; an employment of the higheſt confidence and honour. So wide was his province of intelligence, that, for ſeveral years, it filled all his days and two or three nights in the week.

In the year 1647, his "Miſtreſs" was publiſhed; for he imagined, as he declared in his preface to a ſubſequent edition, that "poets are ſcarcely thought

* In the firſt edition of this Life, Dr Johnſon wrote, "which was never inſerted in any collection of his works;" but he altered the expreſſion when the lives were collected into volumes. The ſatire was added to Cowley's works by the particular direction of Dr. Johnſon. N.

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"freemen of their company without paying ſome "duties, or obliging themſelves to be true to Love."

This obligation to amorous ditties owes, I believe, its original to the fame of Petrarch, who, in an age rude and uncultivated, by his tuneful homage to his Laura, refined the manners of the lettered world, and filled Europe with love and poetry. But the baſis of all excellence is truth: he that profeſſes love ought to feel its power. Petrarch was a real lover, and Laura doubtleſs deſerved his tenderneſs. Of Cowley, we are told by Barnes*, who had means enough of information, that, whatever he may talk of his own inflammability, and the variety of characters by which his heart was divided, he in reality was in love but once, and then never had reſolution to tell his paſſion.

This conſideration cannot but abate, in ſome meaſure, the reader's eſteem for the work and the author. To love excellence, is natural; it is natural likewiſe for the lover to ſolicit reciprocal regard by an elaborate diſplay of his own qualifications. The deſire of pleaſing has in different men produced actions of heroiſm, and effuſions of wit; but it ſeems as reaſonable to appear the champion as the poet of an "airy nothing," and to quarrel as to write for what Cowley might have learned from his maſter Pindar to call the "dream of a ſhadow."

It is ſurely not difficult, in the ſolitude of a college, or in the buſtle of the world, to find uſeful ſtudies and ſerious employment. No man needs to be ſo burthened with life as to ſquander it in volun-

* Barneſii Anacreontem. Dr. J.

tary

tary dreams of fictitious occurrences. The man that ſits down to ſuppoſe himſelf charged with treaſon or peculation, and heats his mind to an elaborate purgation of his character from crimes which he was never within the poſſibility of committing, differs only by the infrequency of his folly from him who praiſes beauty which he never ſaw; complains of jealouſy which he never felt; ſuppoſes himſelf ſometimes invited, and ſometimes forſaken; fatigues his fancy, and ranſacks his memory, for images which may exhibit the gaiety of hope, or the gloominess of deſpair; and dreſſes his imaginary Chloris or Phyllis ſometimes in flowers fading as her beauty, and ſometimes in gems laſting as her virtues.

At Paris, as ſecretary to lord Jermyn, he was engaged in tranſacting things of real importance with real men and real women, and at that time did not much employ his thoughts upon phantoms of gallantry. Some of his letters to Mr. Bennet, afterwards Earl of Arlington, from April to December, in 1650, are preſerved in "Miſcellanea Aulica," a collection of papers publiſhed by Brown. Theſe letters, being written like thoſe of other men whoſe minds are more on things than words, contribute no otherwiſe to his reputation than as they ſhew him to have been above the affectation of unſeaſonable elegance, and to have known that the buſineſs of a ſtateſman can be little forwarded by flowers of rhetorick.

One paſſage, however, ſeems not unworthy of ſome notice. Speaking of the Scotch treaty then in agitation;

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"The Scotch treaty," ſays he, "is the only thing "now in which we are vitally concerned; I am one "of the laſt hopers, and yet cannot now abſtain from "believing that an agreement will be made; all "people upon the place incline to that of union. "The Scotch will moderate ſomething of the rigour "of their demands; the mutual neceſſity of an ac-"cord is viſible, the King is perſuaded of it. And "to tell you the truth (which I take to be an argu-"ment above all the reſt), Virgil has told the ſame "thing to that purpoſe."

This expreſſion from a ſecretary of the preſent time would be conſidered as merely ludicrous, or at moſt as an oſtentatious diſplay of ſcholarſhip; but the manners of that time were ſo tinged with ſuperſtition, that I cannot but ſuſpect Cowley of having conſulted on this great occaſion the Virgilian lots *, and

* Conſulting the Virgilian Lots, Sortes Virgilianæ, is a method of Divination by the opening of Virgil, and applying to the circumſtances of the peruſer the firſt paſſage in either of the two pages that he accidentally fixes his eye on. It is ſaid, that king Charles I. and Lord Falkland, being in the Bodleian library, made this experiment of their future fortunes, and met with paſſages equally ominous to each. That of the king was the following:

At bello audacis populi vexatus & armis,
Finibus extorris, complexu avulſus Iuli,
Auxilium imploret, videatque indigna ſuorum
Funera, nec, cum ſe ſub leges pacis iniquæ
Tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur:
Sed cadat ante diem, mediaque inhumatus arena.

Æneid IV. 615.

Yet let a race untam'd, and haughty foes,
His peaceful entrance with dire arms oppoſe,

Op-

and to have given ſome credit to the anſwer of his oracle.

Oppreſs'd with numbers in th' unequal field,
His men diſcourag'd, and himſelf expell'd:
Let him for ſuccour ſue from place to place,
Torn from his ſubjects and his ſon's embrace.
Firſt let him ſee his friends in battle ſlain,
And their untimely fate lament in vain:
And when, at length, the cruel war ſhall ceaſe,
On hard conditions may he buy his peace;
Nor let him then enjoy ſupreme command,
But fall untimely by ſome hoſtile hand,
And lie unbury'd on the barren ſand.

DRYDEN.

Lord FALKLAND'S:

Non hæc, O Palla, dederas promiſſa parenti,
Cautius ut ſævo velles te credere Marti.
Haud ignarus eram, quantum nova gloria in armis,
Et prædulce decus primo certamine poſſet.
Primitiæ juvenis miſeræ, bellique propinqui
Dura rudimenta, & nulli exaudita Deorum,
Vota preceſque meæ!

Æneid XI. 152.

O Pallas, thou has fail'd thy plighted word,
To fight with caution, not to tempt the ſword;
I warn'd thee, but in vain, for well I knew
What perils youthful ardour would purſue;
That boiling blood would carry thee too far,
Young as thou wert to dangers, raw to war.
O curſt eſſay of arms, diſaſtrous doom,
Prelude of bloody fields and fights to come!
Hard elements of unauſpicious war,
Vain vows to Heaven, and unavailing care!

DRYDEN.

Hoffman, in his Lexicon, gives a very ſatisfactory account of this practice of ſeeking fates in books: and ſays, that it was uſed by the Pagans, the Jewiſh Rabbins, and even the early Chriſtians; the latter taking the New Teſtament for their oracle. H.

Some

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Some years afterwards, "buſineſs," ſays Sprat, "paſſed of courſe into other hands;" and Cowley, being no longer uſeful at Paris, was in 1656 ſent back into England, that, "under pretence of privacy "and retirement, he might take occaſion of giving "notice of the poſture of things in this nation."

Soon after his return to London, he was ſeized by ſome meſſengers of the uſurping powers, who were ſent out in queſt of another man; and being examined, was put into confinement, from which he was not diſmiſſed without the ſecurity of a thouſand pounds given by Dr. Scarborough.

This year he publiſhed his poems, with a preface, in which he ſeems to have inſerted ſomething, ſuppreſſed in ſubſequent editions, which was interpreted to denote ſome relaxation of his loyalty. In this preface he declares, that "his deſire had been for "ſome days paſt, and did ſtill very vehemently con-"tinue, to retire himſelf to ſome of the American "plantations, and to forſake this world for ever."

From the obloquy which the appearance of ſubmiſſion to the uſurpers brought upon him, his biographer has been very diligent to clear him, and indeed it does not ſeem to have leſſened his reputation. His wiſh for retirement we can eaſily believe to be undiſſembled; a man haraſſed in one kingdom, and perſecuted in another, who, after a courſe of buſineſs that employed all his days and half his nights in cyphering and decyphering, comes to his own country and ſteps into a priſon, will be willing enough to retire to ſome place of quiet and of ſafety. Yet let neither our reverence for a genius, nor our pity for a ſufferer, diſpoſe us to forget that,

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that, if his activity was virtue, his retreat was cowardice.

He then took upon himself the character of Physician, still, according to Sprat, with intention, "to "dissemble the main design of his coming over;" and, as Mr. Wood relates, "complying with the "men then in power (which was much taken notice "of by the royal party), he obtained an order to be "created Doctor of Physick, which being done to "his mind (whereby he gained the ill-will of some "of his friends), he went into France again, having "made a copy of verses on Oliver's death."

This is no favourable representation, yet even in this not much wrong can be discovered. How far he complied with the men in power, is to be enquired before he can be blamed. It is not said that he told them any secrets, or assisted them by intelligence or any other act. If he only promised to be quiet, that they in whose hands he was might free him from confinement, he did what no law of society prohibits.

The man whose miscarriage in a just cause has put him in the power of his enemy may, without any violation of his integrity, regain his liberty, or preserve his life, by a promise of neutrality: for, the stipulation gives the enemy nothing which he had not before; the neutrality of a captive may be always secured by his imprisonment or death. He that is at the disposal of another may not promise to aid him in any injurious act, because no power can compel active obedience. He may engage to do nothing, but not to do ill.

There

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There is reaſon to think that Cowley promiſed little. It does not appear that his compliance gained him confidence enough to be truſted without ſecurity, for the bond of his bail was never cancelled; nor that it made him think himſelf ſecure, for at that diſſolution of government, which followed the death of Oliver, he returned into France, where he reſumed his former ſtation, and ſtaid till the Reſtoration.

"He continued," ſays his biographer, "under "theſe bonds till the general deliverance;" it is therefore to be ſuppoſed, that he did not go to France, and act again for the King, without the conſent of his bondſman; that he did not ſhew his loyalty at the hazard of his friend, but by his friend's permiſſion.

Of the verſes on Oliver's death, in which Wood's narrative ſeems to imply ſomething encomiaſtick, there has been no appearance. There is a diſcourſe concerning his government, indeed, with verſes intermixed, but ſuch as certainly gained its author no friends among the abettors of uſurpation.

A doctor of phyſick however he was made at Oxford in December, 1657; and in the commencement of the Royal Society, of which an account has been given by Dr. Birch, he appears buſy among the experimental philoſophers with the title of Dr. Cowley.

There is no reaſon for ſuppoſing that he ever attempted practice; but his preparatory ſtudies have contributed ſomething to the honour of his country. Conſidering Botany as neceſſary to a phyſician, he retired into Kent to gather plants; and as the predominance

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minance of a favourite ſtudy affects all ſubordinate operations of the intellect, Botany in the mind of Cowley turned into Poetry. He compoſed in Latin ſeveral books on Plants, of which the firſt and ſecond diſplay the qualities of Herbs, in elegiac verſe; the third and fourth, the beauties of Flowers in various meaſures; and in the fifth and ſixth, the uſes of Trees, in heroick numbers.

At the ſame time were produced, from the ſame univerſity, the two great Poets, Cowley and Milton, of diſſimilar genius, of oppoſite principles; but concurring in the cultivation of Latin Poetry, in which the Engliſh, till their works and May's poem appeared *, ſeemed unable to conteſt the palm with any other of the lettered nations.

If the Latin performances of Cowley and Milton be compared (for May I hold to be ſuperior to both), the advantage ſeems to lie on the ſide of Cowley. Milton is generally content to expreſs the thoughts of the ancients in their language; Cowley, without much loſs of purity or elegance, accommodates the diction of Rome to his own conceptions.

At the Reſtoration, after all the diligence of his long ſervice, and with conſciouſneſs not only of the merit of fidelity, but of the dignity of great abilities, he naturally expected ample preferments; and, that he might not be forgotten by his own fault, wrote a Song of Triumph. But this was a time of ſuch

* By May's Poem we are here to underſtand a continuation of Lucan's Pharſalia to the death of Julius Cæſar, by Thomas May, an eminent poet and hiſtorian, who flouriſhed in the reigns of James and Charles I. and of whom a life is given in the Biographia Britannica. H.

general

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general hope, that great numbers were inevitably disappointed; and Cowley found his reward very tediously delayed. He had been promised by both Charles the First and Second, the Mastership of the Savoy; "but he lost it," says Wood, "by certain "persons, enemies to the Muses."

The neglect of the court was not his only mortification; having, by such alteration as he thought proper, fitted his old Comedy of "The Guardian" for the stage, he produced it * under the title of "The Cutter of Coleman-street †." It was treated on the stage with great severity, and was afterwards censured as a satire on the King's party.

Mr. Dryden, who went with Mr. Sprat to the first exhibition, related to Mr. Dennis, "that, when "they told Cowley how little favour had been shewn "him, he received the news of his ill success, not "with so much firmness as might have been ex-"pected from so great a man."

What firmness they expected, or what weakness Cowley discovered, cannot be known. He that misses his end will never be as much pleased as he that attains it, even when he can impute no part of his failure to himself; and, when the end is to please the multitude, no man, perhaps, has a right, in things admitting of gradation and comparison, to throw the whole blame upon his judges, and to-

* 1663.

† Here is an error in the designation of this comedy, which our author copied from the title-page of the latter editions of Cowley's works: the title of the play itself is without the article, "Cutter of Coleman-street," and that because a merry sharking fellow about the town, named Cutter, is a principal character in it. H.

tally

tally to exclude diffidence and ſhame by a haughty conſciouſneſs of his own excellence.

For the rejection of this play it is difficult now to find the reaſon: it certainly has, in a very great degree, the power of fixing attention and exciting merriment. From the charge of diſaffection he exculpates himſelf in his preface, by obſerving how unlikely it is that, having followed the royal family through all their diſtreſſes, "he ſhould chuſe the "time of their reſtoration to begin a quarrel with "them." It appears, however, from the Theatrical Regiſter of Downes, the Prompter, to have been popularly conſidered as a ſatire on the Royaliſts.

That he might ſhorten this tedious ſuſpenſe, he publiſhed his pretenſions and his diſcontent, in an ode called "The Complaint;" in which he ſtyles himſelf the *melancholy* Cowley. This met with the uſual fortune of complaints, and ſeems to have excited more contempt than pity.

Theſe unlucky incidents are brought, maliciouſly enough, together in ſome ſtanzas, written about that time, on the choice of a laureat; a mode of ſatire, by which, ſince it was firſt introduced by Suckling, perhaps every generation of poets has been teazed.

Savoy-miſſing Cowley came into the court,
  Making apologies for his bad play;
Every one gave him ſo good a report,
  That Apollo gave heed to all he could ſay:
Nor would he have had, 'tis thought, a rebuke,
  Unleſs he had done ſome notable folly:
Writ verſes unjuſtly in praiſe of Sam Tuke,
  Or printed his pitiful Melancholy.

His

His vehement desire of retirement now came again upon him. Not finding," says the morose Wood, "that preferment conferred upon him which he expected, while others for their money carried away most places, he retired discontented into Surrey."

"He was now," says the courtly Sprat, "weary of the vexations and formalities of an active condition. He had been perplexed with a long compliance to foreign manners. He was satiated with the arts of a court; which sort of life, though his virtue made it innocent to him, yet nothing could make it quiet. Those were the reasons that made him to follow the violent inclination of his own mind, which, in the greatest throng of his former business, had still called upon him, and represented to him the true delights of solitary studies, of temperate pleasures, and a moderate revenue below the malice and flatteries of fortune."

So differently are things seen! and so differently are they shewn! but actions are visible, though motives are secret. Cowley certainly retired; first to Barn-elms, and afterwards to Chertsey, in Surrey. He seems, however, to have lost part of his dread of the *hum of men* *. He thought himself now safe enough from intrusion, without the defence of mountains and oceans; and, instead of seeking shelter in America, wisely went only so far from the bustle of life as that he might easily find his way back, when solitude should grow tedious. His retreat was

* L'Allegro of Milton. Dr. J.

at

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at firſt but ſlenderly accommodated; yet he ſoon obtained, by the intereſt of the earl of St. Alban's and the duke of Buckingham, ſuch a leaſe of the Queen's lands as afforded him an ample income.

By the lovers of virtue and of wit it will be ſolicitouſly aſked, if he now was happy. Let them peruſe one of his letters accidentally preſerved by Peck, which I recommend to the conſideration of all that may hereafter pant for ſolitude.

"To Dr. THOMAS SPRAT.

"Chertſey, May 21, 1665.

"The firſt night that I came hither I caught ſo "great a cold, with a defluxion of rheum, as made "me keep my chamber ten days. And, two after, "had ſuch a bruiſe on my ribs with a fall, that I am "yet unable to move or turn myſelf in my bed. "This is my perſonal fortune here to begin with. "And, beſides, I can get no money from my te-"nants, and have my meadows eaten up every night "by cattle put in by my neighbours. What this "ſignifies, or may come to in time, God knows; "if it be ominous, it can end in nothing leſs than "hanging. Another misfortune has been, and "ſtranger than all the reſt, that you have broke "your word with me, and failed to come, even "though you told Mr. Bois that you would. This "is what they call *Monſtri ſimile*. I do hope to re-"cover my late hurt ſo farre within five or ſix days "(though it be uncertain yet whether I ſhall ever

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"recover it) as to walk about again. And then, me-
"thinks, you and I and *the Dean* might be very
"merry upon St. Ann's Hill. You might very con-
"veniently come hither the way of Hampton Town,
"lying there one night. I write this in pain, and
"can say no more: *Verbum sapienti.*"

He did not long enjoy the pleasure or suffer the uneasiness of solitude; for he died at the Porch-house * in Chertsey, in 1667, in the 49th year of his age.

He was buried with great pomp near Chaucer and Spenser; and king Charles pronounced, "That Mr. "Cowley had not left behind him a better man in "England." He is represented by Dr. Sprat as the most amiable of mankind; and this posthumous praise may safely be credited, as it has never been contradicted by envy or by faction.

Such are the remarks and memorials which I have been able to add to the narrative of Dr. Sprat; who, writing when the feuds of the civil war were yet recent, and the minds of either party were easily irritated, was obliged to pass over many transactions in general expressions, and to leave curiosity often unsatisfied. What he did not tell, cannot however now be known; I must therefore recommend the perusal of his work, to which my narration can be considered only as a slender supplement.

* Now in the possession of Mr. Clark, Alderman of London. Dr. J.—Mr. Clark was, in 1798, elected Chamberlain of London. N.

COW-

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COWLEY, like other poets who have written with narrow views, and, inſtead of tracing intellectual pleaſures in the minds of men, paid their court to temporary prejudices, has been at one time too much praiſed, and too much neglected at another.

Wit, like all other things ſubject by their nature to the choice of man, has its changes and faſhions, and at different times takes different forms. About the beginning of the ſeventeenth century, appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphyſical poets; of whom, in a criticiſm on the works of Cowley, it is not improper to give ſome account.

The metaphyſical poets were men of learning, and to ſhew their learning was their whole endeavour: but, unluckily reſolving to ſhew it in rhyme, inſtead of writing poetry they only wrote verſes, and very often ſuch verſes as ſtood the trial of the finger better than of the ear; for the modulation was ſo imperfect, that they were only found to be verſes by counting the ſyllables.

If the father of criticiſm has rightly denominated poetry τέχνη μιμητική, *an imitative art*, theſe writers will, without great wrong, loſe their right to the name of poets; for they cannot be ſaid to have imitated any thing; they neither copied nature for life; neither painted the forms of matter; nor repreſented the operations of intellect.

Thoſe however who deny them to be poets, allow them to be wits. Dryden confeſſes of himſelf and his contemporaries, that they fall below Donne in wit; but maintains, that they ſurpaſs him in poetry.

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If wit be well described by Pope, as being "that "which has been often thought, but was never before "so well expressed," they certainly never attained, nor ever sought it; for they endeavoured to be singular in their thoughts, and were careless of their diction. But Pope's account of wit is undoubtedly erroneous: he depresses it below its natural dignity, and reduces it from strength of thought to happiness of language.

If by a more noble and more adequate conception that be considered as wit which is at once natural and new, that which, though not obvious, is, upon its first production, acknowledged to be just; if it be that which he that never found it wonders how he missed; to wit of this kind the metaphysical poets have seldom risen. Their thoughts are often new, but seldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they just; and the reader, far from wondering that he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perverseness of industry they were ever found.

But wit, abstracted from its effects upon the hearer, may be more rigorously and philosophically considered as a kind of *discordia concors*; a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike. Of wit, thus defined, they have more than enough. The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons, and allusions; their learning instructs, and their subtlety surprises; but the reader commonly thinks his mprovement dearly bought, and, though he sometimes admires, is seldom pleased.

From

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From this account of their compoſitions it will be readily inferred, that they were not ſucceſsful in repreſenting or moving the affections. As they were wholly employed on ſomething unexpected and ſurpriſing, they had no regard to that uniformity of ſentiment which enables us to conceive and to excite the pains and the pleaſure of other minds: they never enquired what, on any occaſion, they ſhould have ſaid or done; but wrote rather as beholders than partakers of human nature; as Beings looking upon good and evil, impaſſive and at leiſure; as Epicurean deities, making remarks on the actions of men, and the viciſſitudes of life, without intereſt and without emotion. Their courtſhip was void of fondneſs, and their lamentation of ſorrow. Their wiſh was only to ſay what they hoped had been never ſaid before.

Nor was the ſublime more within their reach than the pathetick; for they never attempted that comprehenſion and expanſe of thought which at once fills the whole mind, and of which the firſt effect is ſudden aſtoniſhment, and the ſecond rational admiration. Sublimity is produced by aggregation, and littleneſs by diſperſion. Great thoughts are always general, and conſiſt in poſitions not limited by exceptions, and in deſcriptions not deſcending to minuteneſs. It is with great propriety that Subtlety, which in its original import means exility of particles, is taken in its metaphorical meaning for nicety of diſtinction. Thoſe writers who lay on the watch for novelty could have little hope of greatneſs; for great things cannot have eſcaped former obſervation. Their attempts were always analytick; they broke every image into fragments; and could no more repre-

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ſent, by their ſlender conceits and laboured particularities, the proſpects of nature, or the ſcenes of life, than he who diſſects a ſun-beam with a priſm can exhibit the wide effulgence of a ſummer noon.

What they wanted however of the ſublime, they endeavoured to ſupply by hyperbole; their amplification had no limits; they left not only reaſon but fancy behind them; and produced combinations of confuſed magnificence, that not only could not be credited, but could not be imagined.

Yet great labour, directed by great abilities, is never wholly loſt; if they frequently threw away their wit upon falſe conceits, they likewiſe ſometimes ſtruck out unexpected truth: if their conceits were far-fetched they were often worth the carriage. To write on their plan it was at leaſt neceſſary to read and think. No man could be born a metaphyſical poet, nor aſſume the dignity of a writer, by deſcriptions copied from deſcriptions, by imitations borrowed from imitations, by traditional imagery, and hereditary ſimilies, by readineſs of rhyme, and volubility of ſyllables.

In peruſing the works of this race of authors, the mind is exerciſed either by recollection or inquiry: either ſomething already learned is to be retrieved, or ſomething new is to be examined. If their greatneſs ſeldom elevates, their acuteneſs often ſurpriſes; if the imagination is not always gratified, at leaſt the powers of reflexion and compariſon are employed; and in the maſs of materials which ingenious abſurdity has thrown together, genuine wit and uſeful knowledge may be ſometimes found buried perhaps in groſſneſs of expreſſion, but uſeful to thoſe who know

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know their value; and ſuch as, when they are expanded to perſpicuity, and poliſhed to elegance, may give luſtre to works which have more propriety though leſs copiouſneſs of ſentiment.

This kind of writing, which was, I believe, borrowed from Marino and his followers, had been recommended by the example of Donne, a man of very extenſive and various knowledge; and by Jonſon, whoſe manner reſembled that of Donne more in the ruggedneſs of his lines than in the caſt of his ſentiments.

When their reputation was high, they had undoubtedly more imitators than time has left behind. Their immediate ſucceſſors, of whom any remembrance can be ſaid to remain, were Suckling, Waller, Denham, Cowley, Cleiveland, and Milton. Denham and Waller ſought another way to fame, by improving the harmony of our numbers. Milton tried the metaphyſic ſtyle only in his lines upon Hobſon the Carrier. Cowley adopted it, and excelled his predeceſſors, having as much ſentiment and more muſick. Suckling neither improved verſification, nor abounded in conceits. The faſhionable ſtyle remained chiefly with Cowley; Suckling could not reach it, and Milton diſdained it.

Critical Remarks are not eaſily underſtood without examples; and I have therefore collected inſtances of the modes of writing by which this ſpecies of poets (for poets they were called by themſelves and their admirers) was eminently diſtinguiſhed.

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AS the authors of this race were perhaps more desirous of being admired than understood, they sometimes drew their conceits from recesses of learning not very much frequented by common readers of poetry. Thus Cowley on *Knowledge:*

The sacred tree 'midst the fair orchard grew;
The phœnix Truth did on it rest,
And built his perfum'd nest,
That right Porphyrian tree which did true logic shew.
Each leaf did learned notions give,
And th' apples were demonstrative:
So clear their colour and divine,
The very shade they cast did other lights outshine.

On Anacreon continuing a lover in his old age:

Love was with thy life entwin'd,
Close as heat with fire is join'd;
A powerful brand prescrib'd the date
Of thine, like Meleager's fate.
Th' antiperistasis of age
More enflam'd thy amorous rage.

In the following verses we have an allusion to a Rabbinical opinion concerning Manna:

Variety I ask not: give me one
To live perpetually upon.
The person Love does to us fit,
Like manna, has the taste of all in it.

Thus *Donne* shews his medicinal knowledge in some encomiastick verses:

In every thing there naturally grows
A Balsamum to keep it fresh and new,
If 'twere not injur'd by extrinsique blows;
Your youth and beauty are this balm in you.

But

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But you, of learning and religion,
And virtue and ſuch engredients, have made
A mithridate, whoſe operation
Keeps off, or cures what can be done or ſaid.

Though the following lines of Donne, on the laſt night of the year, have ſomething in them too ſcholaſtick, they are not inelegant:

This twilight of two years, not paſt nor next,
Some emblem is of me, or I of this,
Who, meteor-like, of ſtuff and form perplext,
Whoſe what and where in diſputation is,
If I ſhould call me any thing, ſhould miſs.
I ſum the years and me, and find me not
Debtor to th' old, nor creditor to th' new.
That cannot ſay, my thanks I have forgot,
Nor truſt I this with hopes; and yet ſcarce true
This bravery is, ſince theſe times ſhew'd me you.

DONNE.

Yet more abſtruſe and profound is *Donne's* reflection upon Man as a Microcoſm:

If men be worlds, there is in every one
Something to anſwer in ſome proportion;
All the world's riches: and in good men, this
Virtue, our form's form, and our ſoul's ſoul, is.

OF thoughts ſo far-fatched, as to be not only unexpected, but unnatural, all their books are full.

To a Lady, who wrote poeſies for rings.

They, who above do various circles find,
Say, like a ring, th' equator Heaven does bind.
When Heaven ſhall be adorn'd by thee,
(Which then more Heaven than 'tis will be)

'Tis

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'Tis thou muſt write the poeſy there,
For it wanteth one as yet,
Then the ſun paſs through't twice a year,
The ſun, which is eſteem'd the god of wit.

COWLEY.

The difficulties which have been raiſed about identity in philoſophy, are by Cowley with ſtill more perplexity applied to Love:

Five years ago (ſays ſtory) I lov'd you,
For which you call me moſt inconſtant now;
Pardon me, madam, you miſtake the man;
For I am not the ſame that I was then;
No fleſh is now the ſame 'twas then in me,
And that my mind is chang'd yourſelf may ſee.
The ſame thoughts to retain ſtill, and intents,
Were more inconſtant far: for accidents
Muſt of all things moſt ſtrangely inconſtant prove,
If from one ſubject they t' another move;
My members then, the father members were
From whence theſe take their birth, which now are here.
If then this body love what th' other did,
'Twere inceſt, which by nature is forbid.

The love of different women is, in geographical poetry, compared to travels through different countries:

Haſt thou not found each woman's breaſt
(The land where thou haſt travelled)
Either by ſavages poſſeſt,
Or wild, and uninhabited?
What joy could'ſt take, or what repoſe,
In countries ſo unciviliz'd as thoſe?

Luſt,

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Luſt, the ſcorching dog-ſtar, here
Rages with immoderate heat;
Whilſt Pride, the rugged Northern bear,
In others makes the cold too great.
And where theſe are temperate known,
The ſoil's all barren ſand, or rocky ſtone.

COWLEY.

A Lover, burnt up by his affection, is compared to Egypt:

The fate of Egypt I ſuſtain,
And never feel the dew of rain
From clouds which in the head appear;
But all my too much moiſture owe
To overflowings of the heart below.

COWLEY.

The lover ſuppoſes his lady acquainted with the ancient laws of augury and rites of ſacrifice:

And yet this death of mine, I fear,
Will ominous to her appear:
When found in every other part,
Her ſacrifice is found without an heart.
For the laſt tempeſt of my death
Shall ſigh out that too, with my breath.

That the chaos was harmoniſed, has been recited of old; but whence the different ſounds aroſe remained for a modern to diſcover:

Th' ungovern'd parts no correſpondence knew;
An artleſs war from thwarting motions grew;
Till they to number and fixt rules were brought.
Water and air he for the Tenor choſe,
Earth made the Baſe; the Treble, flame aroſe.

COWLEY.

The

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The tears of lovers are always of great poetical account; but Donne has extended them into worlds. If the lines are not easily understood, they may be read again.

On a round ball
A workman, that hath copies by, can lay
An Europe, Afric, and an Asia,
And quickly make that which was nothing all.
So doth each tear,
Which thee doth wear,
A globe, yea world, by that impression grow,
Till thy tears mixt with mine do overflow
This world, by waters sent from thee my heaven dissolved so.

On reading the following lines, the reader may perhaps cry out—*Confusion worse confounded.*

Here lies a she sun, and a he moon here,
She gives the best light to his sphere,
Or each is both, and all, and so
They unto one another nothing owe.

DONNE.

Who but Donne would have thought that a good man is a telescope?

Though God be our true glass through which we see
All, since the being of all things is he,
Yet are the trunks, which do to us derive
Things in proportion fit, by perspective
Deeds of good men; for by their living here,
Virtues, indeed remote, seem to be near.

Who

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Who would imagine it possible that in a very few lines so many remote ideas could be brought together?

Since 'tis my doom, Love's undershrieve,
Why this reprieve?
Why doth my she advowson fly
Incumbency?
To sell thyself dost thou intend
By candles end,
And hold the contrast thus in doubt,
Life's taper out?
Think but how soon the market fails,
Your sex lives faster than the males;
And if to measure age's span,
The sober Julian were th' account of man,
Whilst you live by the fleet Gregorian.

CLEIVELAND.

OF enormous and disgusting hyperboles, these may be examples:

By every wind that comes this way,
Send me at least a sigh or two,
Such and so many I'll repay
As shall themselves make winds to get to you.

COWLEY.

In tears I'll waste these eyes,
By Love so vainly fed;
So lust of old the Deluge punished.

COWLEY.

All arm'd in brass, the richest dress of war,
(A dismal glorious sight!) he shone afar.
The sun himself started with sudden fright,
To see his beams return so dismal bright.

COWLEY.

An

An universal consternation:

His bloody eyes he hurls round, his sharp paws
Tear up the ground; then runs he wild about,
Lashing his angry tail and roaring out.
Beasts creep into their dens, and tremble there;
Trees, though no wind is stirring, shake with fear;
Silence and horror fill the place around;
Echo itself dares scarce repeat the sound.

COWLEY.

THEIR fictions were often violent and unnatural.

Of his Mistress bathing.

The fish around her crowded, as they do
To the false light that treacherous fishers shew,
And all with as much ease might taken be,
As she at first took me:
For ne'er did light so clear
Among the waves appear,
Though every night the sun himself set there.

COWLEY.

The poetical effect of a lover's name upon glass:

My name engrav'd herein
Doth contribute my firmness to this glass;
Which, ever since that charm, hath been
As hard as that which grav'd it was.

DONNE.

THEIR conceits were sentiments slight and trifling.

On an inconstant woman:

He enjoys the calmy sunshine now,
And no breath stirring hears,
In the clear heaven of thy brow,
No smallest cloud appears.

He

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He ſees thee gentle, fair and gay,
And truſts the faithleſs April of thy May.

COWLEY.

Upon a paper written with the juice of lemon, and read by the fire:

Nothing yet in thee is ſeen,
But when a genial heat warms thee within,
A new-born wood of various lines there grows;
Here buds an L, and there a B,
Here ſpouts a V, and there a T,
And all the flouriſhing letters ſtand in rows.

COWLEY.

As they ſought only for novelty, they did not much enquire whether their alluſions were to things high or low, elegant or groſs: whether they compared the little to the great, or the great to the little.

Phyſick and Chirurgery for a Lover.

Gently, ah gently, madam, touch
The wound, which you yourſelf have made;
That pain muſt needs be very much,
Which makes me of your hand afraid.
Cordials of pity give me now,
For I too weak of purgings grow.

COWLEY.

The World and a Clock.

Mahol th' inferior world's fantaſtic face
Thro' all the turns of matter's maze did trace;
Great Nature's well-ſet clock in pieces took;
On all the ſprings and ſmalleſt wheels did look
Of life and motion, and with equal art
Made up the whole again of every part.

COWLEY.

A coal-

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A coal-pit has not often found its poet; but, that it may not want its due honour, Cleiveland has paralleled it with the Sun:

The moderate value of our guiltleſs ore
Makes no man atheiſt, and no woman whore;
Yet why ſhould hallow'd veſtal's ſacred ſhrine
Deſerve more honour than a flaming mine?
Theſe pregnant wombs of heat would fitter be,
Than a few embers, for a deity.
Had he our pits, the Perſian would admire
No ſun, but warm 's devotion at our fire:
He'd leave the trotting whipſter, and prefer
Our profound Vulcan 'bove that waggoner.
For wants he heat, or light? or would have ſtore,
Or both? 'tis here: and what can ſuns give more?
Nay, what's the ſun but, in a different name,
A coal-pit rampant, or a mine on flame!
Then let this truth reciprocally run,
The ſun 's heaven's coalery, and coals our ſun.

Death, a Voyage:

No family
E'er rigg'd a ſoul for Heaven's diſcovery,
With whom more venturers might boldly dare
Venture their ſtakes, with him in joy to ſhare.

DONNE.

THEIR thoughts and expreſſions were ſometimes groſsly abſurd, and ſuch as no figures or licence can reconcile to the underſtanding.

A Lover neither dead nor alive:

Then down I laid my head
Down on cold earth; and for a while was dead,
And my freed ſoul to a ſtrange ſomewhere fled;

Ah,

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Ah, ſottiſh ſoul, ſaid I,
When back to its cage again I ſaw it fly;
Fool to reſume her broken chain,
And row her galley here again!
Fool, to that body to return
Where it condemn'd and deſtin'd is to burn!
Once dead, how can it be,
Death ſhould a thing ſo pleaſant ſeem to thee,
That thou ſhould'ſt come to live it o'er again in me?

A Lover's heart, a hand grenado:

Wo to her ſtubborn heart, if once mine come
Into the ſelf ſame room;
'Twill tear and blow up all within,
Like a grenado ſhot into a magazin.
Then ſhall Love keep the aſhes, and torn parts,
Of both our broken hearts:
Shall out of both one new one make:
From her's th' allay, from mine the metal take.

COWLEY.

The poetical Propagation of Light:

The prince's favour is diffus'd o'er all,
From which all fortunes, names, and natures fall:
Then from thoſe wombs of ſtars, the Bride's bright eyes,
At every glance a conſtellation flies,
And ſowes the court with ſtars, and doth prevent,
In light and power, the all-ey'd firmament:
Firſt her eye kindles other ladies' eyes,
Then from their beams their jewels' luſtres riſe;
And from their jewels torches do take fire,
And all is warmth, and light, and good deſire.

DONNE.

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THEY were in very little care to clothe their notions with elegance of dreſs, and therefore miſs the notice and the praiſe which are often gained by thoſe who think leſs, but are more diligent to adorn their thoughts.

That a Miſtreſs beloved is fairer in idea than in reality, is by Cowley thus expreſſed:

Thou in my fancy doſt much higher ſtand,
Than woman can be plac'd by Nature's hand;
And I muſt needs, I'm ſure, a loſer be,
To change thee as thou'rt there, for very thee.

That prayer and labour ſhould co-operate, are thus taught by Donne:

In none but us are ſuch mix'd engines found,
As hands of double office; for the ground
We till with them; and them to heaven we raiſe;
Who prayerleſs labours, or, without this, prays,
Doth but one half, that's none.

By the ſame author, a common topick, the danger of procraſtination, is thus illuſtrated:

——— That which I ſhould have begun
In my youth's morning, now late muſt be done;
And I, as giddy travellers muſt do,
Which ſtray or ſleep all day, and having loſt
Light and ſtrength, dark and tir'd, muſt then ride poſt.

All that man has to do is to live and die; the ſum of humanity is comprehended by Donne in the following lines:

Think in how poor a priſon thou didſt lie;
After enabled but to ſuck and cry.

Think,

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Think, when 'twas grown to moſt, 'twas a poor inn,
A province pack'd up in two yards of ſkin,
And that uſurp'd, or threaten'd with a rage
Of ſickneſſes, or their true mother, age.
But think that death hath now enfranchis'd thee;
Thou haſt thy expanſion now, and liberty;
Think, that a ruſty piece diſcharg'd is flown
In pieces, and the bullet is his own,
And freely flies: this to thy ſoul allow,
Think thy ſhell broke, think thy ſoul hatch'd but now.

THEY were ſometimes indelicate and diſguſting. Cowley thus apoſtrophiſes beauty:

——Thou tyrant which leav'ſt no man free!
Thou ſubtle thief, from whom nought ſafe can be!
Thou murtherer, which haſt kill'd; and devil, which would'ſt damn me!

Thus he addreſſes his Miſtreſs:

Thou who, in many a propriety,
So truly art the ſun to me,
Add one more likeneſs, which I'm ſure you can,
And let me and my ſun beget a man.

Thus he repreſents the meditations of a Lover:

Though in thy thoughts ſcarce any tracts have been
So much as of original ſin,
Such charms thy beauty wears, as might
Deſires in dying conſeſt ſaints excite.
Thou with ſtrange adultery
Doſt in each breaſt a brothel keep;
Awake all men do luſt for thee,
And ſome enjoy thee when they ſleep.

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The true taste of Tears.

Hither with crystal vials, lovers, come,
And take my tears, which are love's wine,
And try your mistress' tears at home;
For all are false, that taste not just like mine.

DONNE.

This is yet more indelicate:

As the sweet sweat of roses in a still,
As that which from chaf'd musk-cat's pores doth trill,
As the almighty balm of th' early East;
Such are the sweet drops of my mistress' breast.
And on her neck her skin such lustre sets,
They seem no sweat drops, but pearl coronets:
Rank, sweaty froth thy mistress' brow defiles.

DONNE.

THEIR expressions sometimes raise horror, when they intend perhaps to be pathetick:

As men in hell are from diseases free,
So from all other ills am I,
Free from their known formality:
But all pains eminently lie in thee.

COWLEY.

THEY were not always strictly curious, whether the opinions from which they drew their illustrations were true; it was enough that they were popular. Bacon remarks, that some falsehoods are continued by tradition, because they supply commodious allusions.

It gave a piteous groan, and so it broke:
In vain it something would have spoke;

The

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The love within too ſtrong for 't was,
Like poiſon put into a Venice-glaſs.

COWLEY.

IN forming deſcriptions, they looked out not for images, but for conceits. Night has been a common ſubject, which poets have contended to adorn. Dryden's Night is well known; Donne's is as follows:

Thou ſeeſt me here at midnight, now all reſt:
Time's dead low-water; when all minds diveſt
To-morrow's buſineſs; when the labourers have
Such reſt in bed, that their laſt church-yard grave,
Subject to change, will ſcarce be a type of this;
Now when the client, whoſe laſt hearing is
To-morrow, ſleeps; when the condemned man,
Who, when he opes his eyes, muſt ſhut them then
Again by death, although ſad watch he keep,
Doth practiſe dying by a little ſleep;
Thou at this midnight ſeeſt me.

IT muſt be however confeſſed of theſe writers, that if they are upon common ſubjects often unneceſſarily and unpoetically ſubtle; yet, where ſcholaſtick ſpeculation can be properly admitted, their copiouſneſs and acuteneſs may juſtly be admired. What Cowley has written upon Hope ſhews an unequalled fertility of invention:

Hope, whoſe weak being ruin'd is,
Alike if it ſucceed and if it miſs;
Whom good or ill does equally confound,
And both the horns of Fate's dilemma wound;
Vain ſhadow! which doſt vaniſh quite,
Both at full noon and perfect night!

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The ſtars have not a poſſibility
Of bleſſing thee;
If things then from their end we happy call,
'Tis Hope is the moſt hopeleſs thing of all.

Hope, thou bold taſter of delight,
Who, whilſt thou ſhould'ſt but taſte, devour'ſt it quite!
Thou bring'ſt us an eſtate, yet leav'ſt us poor,
By clogging it with legacies before!
The joys which we entire ſhould wed,
Come deflower'd virgins to our bed;
Good fortunes without gain imported be,
Such mighty cuſtom's paid to thee:
For joy, like wine kept cloſe, does better taſte;
If it take air before its ſpirits waſte.

To the following compariſon of a man that travels and his wife that ſtays at home, with a pair of compaſſes, it may be doubted whether abſurdity or ingenuity has better claim:

Our two ſouls, therefore, which are one,
Though I muſt go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expanſion,
Like gold to airy thinneſs beat.
If they be two, they are two ſo
As ſtiff twin compaſſes are two;
Thy ſoul, the fix'd foot, makes no ſhow
To move, but doth if th' other do.
And though it in the centre ſit,
Yet, when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect as that comes home.
Such wilt thou be to me, who muſt
Like th' other foot obliquely run.
Thy firmneſs makes my circle juſt,
And makes me end where I begun.

DONNE.

In

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In all these examples it is apparent, that whatever is improper or vitious is produced by a voluntary deviation from nature in pursuit of something new and strange; and that the writers fail to give delight by their desire of exciting admiration.

HAVING thus endeavoured to exhibit a general representation of the style and sentiments of the metaphysical poets, it is now proper to examine particularly the works of Cowley, who was almost the last of that race, and undoubtedly the best.

His Miscellanies contain a collection of short compositions, written some as they were dictated by a mind at leisure, and some as they were called forth by different occasions; with great variety of style and sentiment, from burlesque levity to awful grandeur. Such an assemblage of diversified excellence no other poet has hitherto afforded. To choose the best, among many good, is one of the most hazardous attempts of criticism. I know not whether Scaliger himself has persuaded many readers to join with him in his preference of the two favourite odes, which he estimates in his raptures at the value of a kingdom. I will, however, venture to recommend Cowley's first piece, which ought to be inscribed *To my Muse*, for want of which the second couplet is without reference. When the title is added, there will still remain a defect; for every piece ought to contain in itself whatever is necessary to make it intelligible. Pope has some epitaphs without names; which are therefore epitaphs to be lett, occupied indeed for the present, but hardly appropriated.

The ode on Wit is almost without a rival. It was about the time of Cowley that *Wit*, which had been

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till then uſed for *Intellection*, in contradiſtinction to *Will*, took the meaning, whatever it be, which it now bears.

Of all the paſſages in which poets have exemplified their own precepts, none will eaſily be found of greater excellence than that in which Cowley condemns exuberance of wit:

Yet 'tis not to adorn and gild each part,
That ſhews more coſt than art.
Jewels at noſe and lips but ill appear;
Rather than all things wit, let none be there.
Several lights will not be ſeen,
If there be nothing elſe between.
Men doubt, becauſe they ſtand ſo thick i'th' ſky,
If thoſe be ſtars which paint the galaxy.

In his verſes to Lord Falkland, whom every man of his time was proud to praiſe, there are, as there muſt be in all Cowley's compoſitions, ſome ſtriking thoughts, but they are not well wrought. His elegy on Sir Henry Wotton is vigorous and happy; the ſeries of thoughts is eaſy and natural; and the concluſion, though a little weakened by the intruſion of Alexander, is elegant and forcible.

It may be remarked, that in this Elegy, and in moſt of his encomiaſtick poems, he has forgotten or neglected to name his heroes.

In his poem on the death of Hervey, there is much praiſe, but little paſſion; a very juſt and ample delineation of ſuch virtues as a ſtudious privacy admits, and ſuch intellectual excellence as a mind not yet called forth to action can diſplay. He knew how to diſtinguiſh, and how to commend, the qualities

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ties of his companion; but, when he wiſhes to make us weep, he forgets to weep himſelf, and diverts his ſorrow by imagining how his crown of bays, if he had it, would *crackle* in the *fire*. It is the odd fate of this thought to be the worſe for being true. The bay-leaf crackles remarkably as it burns; as therefore this property was not aſſigned it by chance, the mind muſt be thought ſufficiently at eaſe that could attend to ſuch minuteneſs of phyſiology. But the power of Cowley is not ſo much to move the affections, as to exerciſe the underſtanding.

The *Chronicle* is a compoſition unrivalled and alone: ſuch gaiety of fancy, ſuch facility of expreſſion, ſuch varied ſimilitude, ſuch a ſucceſſion of images, and ſuch a dance of words, it is in vain to expect except from Cowley. His ſtrength always appears in his agility; his volatility is not the flutter of a light, but the bound of an elaſtick mind. His levity never leaves his learning behind it; the moraliſt, the politician, and the critick, mingle their influence even in this airy frolick of genius. To ſuch a performance Suckling could have brought the gaiety, but not the knowledge; Dryden could have ſupplied the knowledge, but not the gaiety.

The verſes to Davenant, which are vigorouſly begun, and happily concluded, contain ſome hints of criticiſm very juſtly conceived and happily expreſſed. Cowley's critical abilities have not been ſufficiently obſerved: the few deciſions and remarks, which his prefaces and his notes on the Davideis ſupply, were at that time acceſſions to Engliſh literature, and ſhew ſuch ſkill as raiſes our wiſh for more examples.

The

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The lines from Jerſey are a very curious and pleaſing ſpecimen of the familiar deſcending to the burleſque.

His two metrical diſquiſitions *for* and *againſt* Reaſon are no mean ſpecimens of metaphyſical poetry. The ſtanzas againſt knowledge produce little conviction. In thoſe which are intended to exalt the human faculties, Reaſon has its proper taſk aſſigned it; that of judging, not of things revealed, but of the reality of revelation. In the verſes *for* Reaſon is a paſſage which Bentley, in the only Engliſh verſes which he is known to have written, ſeems to have copied, though with the inferiority of an imitator.

The Holy Book like the eighth ſphere doth ſhine
With thouſand lights of truth divine,
So numberleſs the ſtars, that to our eye
It makes all but one galaxy.
Yet Reaſon muſt aſſiſt too; for, in ſeas
So vaſt and dangerous as theſe,
Our courſe by ſtars above we cannot know
Without the compaſs too below.

After this ſay Bentley *:

Who travels in religious jars,
Truth mix'd with error, ſhade with rays,
Like Whiſton wanting pyx or ſtars,
In occean wide or ſinks or ſtrays.

Cowley ſeems to have had what Milton is believed to have wanted, the ſkill to rate his own performances by their juſt value, and has therefore

* Dodſley's Collection of Poems, Vol. V. R.

closed

closed his Miscellanies with the verses upon Crashaw, which apparently excel all that have gone before them, and in which there are beauties which common authors may justly think not only above their attainment, but above their ambition.

To the Miscellanies succeed the *Anacreontiques*, or paraphrastical translations of some little poems, which pass, however justly, under the name of Anacreon. Of those songs dedicated to festivity and gaiety, in which even the morality is voluptuous, and which teach nothing but the enjoyment of the present day, he has given rather a pleasing than a faithful representation, having retained their spritelinesS, but lost their simplicity. The Anacreon of Cowley, like the Homer of Pope, has admitted the decoration of some modern graces, by which he is undoubtedly more amiable to common readers, and perhaps, if they would honestly declare their own perceptions, to far the greater part of those whom courtesy and ignorance are content to style the Learned.

These little pieces will be found more finished in their kind than any other of Cowley's works. The diction shews nothing of the mould of time, and the sentiments are at no great distance from our present habitudes of thought. Real mirth must always be natural, and nature is uniform. Men have been wise in very different modes; but they have always laughed the same way.

Levity of thought naturally produced familiarity of language, and the familiar part of language continues long the same; the dialogue of comedy, when it is transcribed from popular manners and real life, is read from age to age with equal pleasure. The artifices

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artifices of inversion, by which the established order of words is changed, or of innovation, by which new words or meanings of words are introduced, is practised, not by those who talk to be understood, but by those who write to be admired.

The Anacreontiques therefore of Cowley give now all the pleasure which they ever gave. If he was formed by nature for one kind of writing more than for another, his power seems to have been greatest in the familiar and the festive.

The next class of his poems is called *The Mistress*, of which it is not necessary to select any particular pieces for praise or censure. They have all the same beauties and faults, and nearly in the same proportion. They are written with exuberance of wit, and with copiousness of learning; and it is truly asserted by Sprat, that the plenitude of the writer's knowledge flows in upon his page, so that the reader is commonly surprized into some improvement. But, considered as the verses of a lover, no man that has ever loved will much commend them. They are neither courtly nor pathetick, have neither gallantry nor fondness. His praises are too far sought, and too hyperbolical, either to express love, or to excite it; every stanza is crowded with darts and flames, with wounds and death, with mingled souls and with broken hearts.

The principal artifice by which *The Mistress* is filled with conceits is very copiously displayed by Addison. Love is by Cowley, as by other poets, expressed metaphorically by flame and fire; and that which is true of real fire is said of love, or figurative fire, the same word in the same sentence retaining both

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both ſignifications. Thus, "obſerving the cold re-
"gard of his miſtreſs's eyes, and at the ſame time
"their power of producing love in him, he conſiders
"them as burning-glaſſes made of ice. Finding him-
"ſelf able to live in the greateſt extremities of love,
"he concludes the torrid zone to be habitable.
"Upon the dying of a tree on which he had cut
"his loves, he obſerves that his flames had burnt
"up and withered the tree."

Theſe conceits Addiſon calls mixed wit; that is, wit which conſiſts of thoughts true in one ſenſe of the expreſſion, and falſe in the other. Addiſon's repreſentation is ſufficiently indulgent: that confuſion of images may entertain for a moment; but, being unnatural, it ſoon grows weariſome. Cowley delighted in it, as much as if he had invented it; but, not to mention the antients, he might have found it full-blown in modern Italy. Thus Sannazaro:

Aſpice quam variis diſtringar Leſbia curis!
Uror, & heu! noſtro manat ab igne liquor:
Sum Nilus, ſumque Ætna ſimul; reſtringite flammas
O lacrimæ, aut lacrimas ebibe flamma meas.

One of the ſevere theologians of that time cenſured him as having publiſhed *a book of profane and laſcivious Verſes.* From the charge of profaneneſs, the conſtant tenour of his life, which ſeems to have been eminently virtuous, and the general tendency of his opinions which diſcover no irreverence of religion, muſt defend him; but that the accuſation of laſciviouſneſs is unjuſt, the peruſal of his work will ſufficiently evince.

Cowley's *Miſtreſs* has no power of ſeduction: ſhe "plays round the head, but reaches not the heart."

Her

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Her beauty and absence, her kindness and cruelty, her disdain and inconstancy, produce no correspondence of emotion. His poetical account of the virtues of plants, and colours of flowers, is not perused with more sluggish frigidity. The compositions are such as might have been written for penance by a hermit, or for hire by a philosophical rhymer who had only heard of another sex; for they turn the mind only on the writer, whom, without thinking on a woman but as the subject for his task, we sometimes esteem as learned, and sometimes despise as trifling, always admire as ingenious, and always condemn as unnatural.

The Pindarique Odes are now to be considered; a species of composition, which Cowley thinks Pancirolus might have counted in *his list of the lost inventions of antiquity*, and which he has made a bold and vigorous attempt to recover.

The purpose with which he has paraphrased an Olympick and Nemæan Ode is by himself sufficiently explained. His endeavour was, not to shew *precisely what Pindar spoke, but his manner of speaking*. He was therefore not at all restrained to his expressions, nor much to his sentiments; nothing was required of him, but not to write as Pindar would not have written.

Of the Olympick Ode, the beginning is, I think, above the original in elegance, and the conclusion below it in strength. The connection is supplied with great perspicuity; and the thoughts, which to a reader of less skill seem thrown together by chance, are concatenated without any abruption. Though the

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the Engliſh ode cannot be called a tranſlation, it may be very properly conſulted as a commentary.

The ſpirit of Pindar is indeed not every where equally preſerved. The following pretty lines are not ſuch as his *deep mouth* was uſed to pour:

> Great Rhea's ſon,
> If in Olympus' top, where thou
> Sitt'ſt to behold thy ſacred ſhow,
> If in Alpheus' ſilver flight,
> If in my verſe, thou take delight,
> My verſe, great Rhea's ſon, which is
> Lofty as that and ſmooth as this.

In the Nemæan ode the reader muſt, in mere juſtice to Pindar, obſerve, that whatever is ſaid of *the original new moon, her tender fore-head and her horns*, is ſuperadded by his paraphraſt, who has many other plays of words and fancy unſuitable to the original, as,

> The table, free for ev'ry gueſt,
> No doubt will thee admit,
> And feaſt more upon thee, than thou on it.

He ſometimes extends his author's thoughts without improving them. In the Olympionick an oath is mentioned in a ſingle word, and Cowley ſpends three lines in ſwearing by the *Caſtalian Stream*. We are told of Theron's bounty, with a hint that he had enemies, which Cowley thus enlarges in rhyming proſe:

> But in this thankleſs world the giver
> Is envied even by the receiver;

'Tis

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'Tis now the cheap and frugal fashion
Rather to hide than own the obligation:
Nay, 'tis much worse than so;
It now an artifice does grow
Wrongs and injuries to do,
Lest men should think we owe.

It is hard to conceive that a man of the first rank in learning and wit, when he was dealing out such minute morality in such feeble diction, could imagine, either waking or dreaming, that he imitated Pindar.

In the following odes, where Cowley chooses his own subjects, he sometimes rises to dignity truly Pindarick; and, if some deficiencies of language be forgiven, his strains are such as those of the Theban Bard were to his contemporaries:

Begin the song, and strike the living lyre:
Lo how the years to come, a numerous and well-fitted quire,
All hand in hand do decently advance,
And to my song with smooth and equal measure dance;
While the dance lasts, how long soe'er it be,
My musick's voice shall bear it company;
Till all gentle notes be drown'd
In the last trumpet's dreadful sound.

After such enthusiasm, who will not lament to find the poet conclude with lines like these:

But stop, my Muse—
Hold thy Pindarick Pegasus closely in,
Which does to rage begin—
—'Tis an unruly and a hard-mouth'd horse—

'Twill

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'Twill no unskilful touch endure,
But flings writer and reader too that sits not sure.

The fault of Cowley, and perhaps of all the writers of the metaphysical race, is that of pursuing his thoughts to the last ramifications, by which he loses the grandeur of generality; for of the greatest things the parts are little; what is little can be but pretty, and by claiming dignity becomes ridiculous. Thus all the power of description is destroyed by a scrupulous enumeration, and the force of metaphors is lost, when the mind by the mention of particulars is turned more upon the original than the secondary sense, more upon that from which the illustration is drawn than that to which it is applied.

Of this we have a very eminent example in the ode intituled *The Muse*, who goes to *take the air* in an intellectual chariot, to which he harnesses Fancy and Judgement, Wit and Eloquence, Memory and Invention: how he distinguished Wit from Fancy, or how Memory could properly contribute to Motion, he has not explained: we are however content to suppose that he could have justified his own fiction, and wish to see the Muse begin her career; but there is yet more to be done.

Let the *postillion* Nature mount, and let
The *coachman* Art be set;
And let the airy *footmen*, running all beside,
Make a long row of goodly pride;
Figures, conceits, raptures, and sentences,
In a well-worded dress,
And innocent loves, and pleasant truths, and useful lies,
In all their gaudy *liveries*.

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Every mind is now disgusted with this cumber of magnificence; yet I cannot refuse myself the four next lines:

Mount, glorious queen, thy travelling throne,
And bid it to put on;
For long though chearful is the way,
And life, alas! allows but one ill winter's day.

In the same ode, celebrating the power of the Muse, he gives her prescience, or, in poetical language, the foresight of events hatching in futurity; but, having once an egg in his mind, he cannot forbear to shew us that he knows what an egg contains:

Thou into the close nests of Time dost peep,
And there with piercing eye
Through the firm shell and the thick white dost spy
Years to come a-forming lie,
Close in their sacred fecundine asleep.

The same thought is more generally, and therefore more poetically expressed by Casimer, a writer who has many of the beauties and faults of Cowley:

Omnibus mundi Dominator horis
Aptat urgendas per inane pennas,
Pars adhuc nido latet, & futuros
Crescit in annos.

Cowley, whatever was his subject, seems to have been carried, by a kind of destiny, to the light and the familiar, or to conceits which require still more ignoble epithets. A slaughter in the Red Sea *new dies the waters name*; and England, during the Civil War, was *Albion no more, nor to be named from white.* It is surely by some fascination not easily surmounted, that

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that a writer, professing to revive *the noblest and highest writing in verse*, makes this address to the new year:

Nay, if thou lov'st me, gentle year,
Let not so much as love be there,
Vain, fruitless love I mean; for, gentle year,
  Although I fear
There's of this caution little need,
  Yet, gentle year, take heed
  How thou dost make
  Such a mistake;
Such love I mean alone
As by thy cruel predecessors has been shewn:
For, though I have too much cause to doubt it,
I fain would try, for once, if life can live without it.

The reader of this will be inclined to cry out with Prior—

Ye Criticks, say,
How poor to this was Pindar's style!

Even those who cannot perhaps find in the Isthmian or Nemæan songs what Antiquity has disposed them to expect, will at least see that they are ill-represented by such puny poetry; and all will determine that if this be the old Theban strain, it is not worthy of revival.

To the disproportion and incongruity of Cowley's sentiments must be added the uncertainty and looseness of his measures. He takes the liberty of using in any place a verse of any length, from two syllables to twelve. The verses of Pindar have, as he observes, very little harmony to a modern ear; yet by examining the syllables we perceive them to be

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regular, and have reaſon enough for ſuppoſing that the ancient audiences were delighted with the ſound. The imitator ought therefore to have adopted what he found, and to have added what was wanting; to have preſerved a conſtant return of the ſame numbers, and to have ſupplied ſmoothneſs of tranſition and continuity of thought.

It is urged by Dr. Sprat, that the *irregularity of numbers is the very thing* which makes *that kind of poeſy fit for all manner of ſubjects.* But he ſhould have remembered, that what is fit for every thing can fit nothing well. The great pleaſure of verſe ariſes from the known meaſure of the lines, and uniform ſtructure of the ſtanzas, by which the voice is regulated, and the memory relieved.

If the Pindarick ſtyle be, what Cowley thinks it, *the higheſt and nobleſt kind of writing in verſe*, it can be adapted only to high and noble ſubjects; and it will not be eaſy to reconcile the poet with the critick, or to conceive how that can be the higheſt kind of writing in verſe which, according to Sprat, *is chiefly to be preferred for its near affinity to proſe.*

This lax and lawleſs verſification ſo much concealed the deficiencies of the barren, and flattered the lazineſs of the idle, that it immediately overſpread our books of poetry; all the boys and girls caught the pleaſing faſhion, and they that could do nothing elſe could write like Pindar. The rights of antiquity were invaded, and diſorder tried to break into the Latin: a poem * on the Sheldonian Theatre,

* Firſt publiſhed in quarto, 1669, under the title of "Carmen Pindaricum in Theatrum Sheldonianum in ſolennibus "magnifici Operis Encæniis. Recitatum Julii die 9, Anno 1669, "a Corbetto Owen, A. B. Æd. Chr. Alumno Authore." R.

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in which all kinds of verſe are ſhaken together, is unhappily inſerted in the *Muſæ Anglicanæ*. Pindariſm prevailed about half a century; but at laſt died gradually away, and other imitations ſupply its place.

The Pindarick Odes have ſo long enjoyed the higheſt degree of poetical reputation, that I am not willing to diſmiſs them with unabated cenſure; and ſurely though the mode of their compoſition be erroneous, yet many parts deſerve at leaſt that admiration which is due to great comprehenſion of knowledge, and great fertility of fancy. The thoughts are often new, and often ſtriking; but the greatneſs of one part is diſgraced by the littleneſs of another; and total negligence of language gives the nobleſt conceptions the appearance of a fabrick auguſt in the plan, but mean in the materials. Yet ſurely thoſe verſes are not without a juſt claim to praiſe; of which it may be ſaid with truth, that no man but Cowley could have written them.

The Davideis now remains to be conſidered; a poem which the author deſigned to have extended to twelve books, merely, as he makes no ſcruple of declaring, becauſe the Æneid had that number; but he had leiſure or perſeverance only to write the third part. Epick poems have been left unfiniſhed by Virgil, Statius, Spenſer, and Cowley. That we have not the whole Davideis is, however, not much to be regretted; for in this undertaking Cowley is, tacitly at leaſt, confeſſed to have miſcarried. There are not many examples of ſo great a work, produced by an author generally read, and generally praiſed, that has crept through a century with ſo

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little regard. Whatever is ſaid of Cowley, is meant of his other works. Of the Davideis no mention is made; it never appears in books, nor emerges in converſation. By the *Spectator* it has been once quoted; by *Rymer* it has once been praiſed; and by *Dryden*, in "Mac Flecknoe," it has once been imitated; nor do I recollect much other notice from its publication till now in the whole ſucceſſion of Engliſh literature.

Of this ſilence and neglect, if the reaſon be inquired, it will be found partly in the choice of the ſubject, and partly in the performance of the work.

Sacred Hiſtory has been always read with ſubmiſſive reverence, and an imagination overawed and controlled. We have been accuſtomed to acquieſce in the nakedneſs and ſimplicity of the authentic narrative, and to repoſe on its veracity with ſuch humble confidence as ſuppreſſes curioſity. We go with the hiſtorian as he goes, and ſtop with him when he ſtops. All amplification is frivolous and vain; all addition to that which is already ſufficient for the purpoſes of religion ſeems not only uſeleſs, but in ſome degree profane.

Such events as were produced by the viſible interpoſition of Divine Power are above the power of human genius to dignify. The miracle of Creation, however it may teem with images, is beſt deſcribed with little diffuſion of language: *He ſpake the word, and they were made.*

We are told that Saul *was troubled with an evil ſpirit*; from this Cowley takes an opportunity of deſcribing Hell, and telling the hiſtory of Lucifer, who was, he ſays,

Once

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Once general of a gilded hoſt of ſprites,
Like Heſper leading forth the ſpangled nights;
But down like light'ning, which him ſtruck, he came,
And roar'd at his firſt plunge into the flame.

Lucifer makes a ſpeech to the inferior agents of miſchief, in which there is ſomething of Heatheniſm, and therefore of impropriety; and, to give efficacy to his words, concludes by laſhing *his breaſt with his long tail.* Envy, after a pauſe, ſteps out, and among other declarations of her zeal utters theſe lines:

Do thou but threat, loud ſtorms ſhall make reply,
And thunder echo to the trembling ſky;
Whilſt raging ſeas ſwell to ſo bold an height,
As ſhall the fire's proud element affright.
Th' old drudging Sun, from his long-beaten way,
Shall at thy voice ſtart, and miſguide the day.
The jocund orbs ſhall break their meaſur'd pace,
And ſtubborn poles change their allotted place.
Heaven's gilded troops ſhall flutter here and there,
Leaving their boaſting ſongs tun'd to a ſphere.

Every reader feels himſelf weary with this uſeleſs talk of an allegorical Being.

It is not only when the events are confeſſedly miraculous, that fancy and fiction loſe their effect: the whole ſyſtem of life, while the Theocracy was yet viſible, has an appearance ſo different from all other ſcenes of human action, that the reader of the Sacred Volume habitually conſiders it as the peculiar mode of exiſtence of a diſtinct ſpecies of mankind, that lived and acted with manners uncommunicable; ſo that it is difficult even for imagination to place us in the ſtate of them whoſe ſtory is re-

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lated, and by consequence their joys and griefs are not easily adopted, nor can the attention be often interested in any thing that befalls them.

To the subject thus originally indisposed to the reception of poetical embellishments, the writer brought little that could reconcile impatience, or attract curiosity. Nothing can be more disgusting than a narrative spangled with conceits; and conceits are all that the Davideis supplies.

One of the great sources of poetical delight is description, or the power of presenting pictures to the mind. Cowley gives inferences instead of images, and shews not what may be supposed to have been seen, but what thoughts the sight might have suggested. When Virgil describes the stone which Turnus lifted against Æneas, he fixes the attention on its bulk and weight:

> Saxum circumspicit ingens,
> Saxum antiquum, ingens, campo quod forte jacebat
> Limes agro positus, litem ut discerneret arvis.

Cowley says of the stone with which Cain slew his brother,

> I saw him fling the stone, as if he meant
> At once his murther and his monument.

Of the sword taken from Goliah, he says,

> A sword so great, that it was only fit
> To cut off his great head that came with it.

Other poets describe Death by some of its common appearances. Cowley says, with a learned allusion to sepulchral lamps real or fabulous,

'Twixt

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'Twixt his right ribs deep pierc'd the furious blade,
And open'd wide those secret vessels where
Life's light goes out, when first they let in air.

But he has allusions vulgar as well as learned. In a visionary succession of kings:

Joas at first does bright and glorious shew,
In life's fresh morn his fame does early crow.

Describing an undisciplined army, after having said with elegance,

His forces seem'd no army, but a crowd
Heartless, unarm'd, disorderly, and loud,

he gives them a fit of the ague.

The allusions, however, are not always to vulgar things; he offends by exaggeration as much as by diminution:

The king was plac'd alone, and o'er his head
A well-wrought heaven of silk and gold was spread.

Whatever he writes is always polluted with some conceit:

Where the sun's fruitful beams give metals birth,
Where he the growth of fatal gold does see,
Gold, which alone more influence has than he.

In one passage he starts a sudden question to the confusion of philosophy:

Ye learned heads, whom ivy garlands grace,
Why does that twining plant the oak embrace;
The oak for courtship most of all unfit,
And rough as are the winds that fight with it?

His

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His expreſſions have ſometimes a degree of meanneſs that ſurpaſſes expectation:

Nay, gentle gueſts, he cries, ſince now you're in,
The ſtory of your gallant friend begin.

In a ſimile deſcriptive of the Morning:

As glimmering ſtars juſt at th' approach of day,
Caſhier'd by troops, at laſt all drop away.

The dreſs of Gabriel deſerves attention:

He took for ſkin a cloud moſt ſoft and bright,
That e'er the mid-day ſun pierc'd through with light;
Upon his cheeks a lively bluſh he ſpread,
Waſh'd from the morning beauties' deepeſt red:
An harmleſs flatt'ring meteor ſhone for hair,
And fell adown his ſhoulders with looſe care;
He cuts out a ſilk mantle from the ſkies,
Where the moſt ſprightly azure pleas'd the eyes;
This he with ſtarry vapours ſprinkles all,
Took in their prime ere they grow ripe and fall;
Of a new rainbow ere it fret or fade,
The choiceſt piece cut out, a ſcarfe is made.

This is a juſt ſpecimen of Cowley's imagery: what might in general expreſſions be great and forcible, he weakens and makes ridiculous by branching it into ſmall parts. That Gabriel was inveſted with the ſofteſt or brighteſt colours of the ſky, we might have been told, and been diſmiſſed to improve the idea in our different proportions of conception; but Cowley could not let us go till he had related where Gabriel got firſt his ſkin, and then his mantle, then his lace, and then his ſcarfe, and related it in the terms of the mercer and tailor.

Some-

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Sometimes he indulges himſelf in a digreſſion, always conceived with his natural exubérance, and commonly, even where it is not long, continued till it is tedious:

I' th' library a few choice authors ſtood,
Yet 'twas well ſtor'd, for that ſmall ſtore was good;
Writing, man's ſpiritual phyſick, was not then
Itſelf, as now, grown a diſeaſe of men.
Learning (young virgin) but few ſuitors knew;
The common proſtitute ſhe lately grew,
And with the ſpurious brood loads now the preſs;
Laborious effects of idleneſs.

As the Davideis affords only four books, though intended to conſiſt of twelve, there is no opportunity for ſuch criticiſm as Epick poems commonly ſupply. The plan of the whole work is very imperfectly ſhewn by the third part. The duration of an unfiniſhed action cannot be known. Of characters either not yet introduced, or ſhewn but upon few occaſions, the full extent and the nice diſcriminations cannot be aſcertained. The fable is plainly implex, formed rather from the Odyſſey than the Iliad: and many artifices of diverſification are employed, with the ſkill of a man acquainted with the beſt models. The paſt is recalled by narration, and the future anticipated by viſion: but he has been ſo laviſh of his poetical art, that it is difficult to imagine how he could fill eight books more without practiſing again the ſame modes of diſpoſing his matter; and perhaps the perception of this growing incumbrance inclined him to ſtop. By this abruption, poſterity loſt more inſtruction than delight. If the continuation of the Davideis can be miſſed, it

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it is for the learning that had been diffuſed over it, and the notes in which it had been explained.

Had not his characters been depraved like every other part by improper decorations, they would have deſerved uncommon praiſe. He gives Saul both the body and mind of a hero :

> His way once choſe, he forward thruſt outright,
> Nor turn'd aſide for danger or delight.

And the different beauties of the lofty Merah and the gentle Michol are very juſtly conceived and ſtrongly painted.

Rymer has declared the Davideis ſuperior to the *Jeruſalem* of *Taſſo*, "which," ſays he, "the poet, "with all his care, has not totally purged from "pedantry." If by pedantry is meant that minute knowledge which is derived from particular ſciences and ſtudies, in oppoſition to the general notions ſupplied by a wide ſurvey of life and nature, Cowley certainly errs, by introducing pedantry, far more frequently than Taſſo. I know not, indeed, why they ſhould be compared; for the reſemblance of Cowley's work to Taſſo's is only that they both exhibit the agency of celeſtial and infernal ſpirits, in which however they differ widely; for Cowley ſuppoſes them commonly to operate upon the mind by ſuggeſtion; Taſſo repreſents them as promoting or obſtructing events by external agency.

Of particular paſſages that can be properly compared, I remember only the deſcription of Heaven, in which the different manner of the two writers is ſufficiently diſcernible. Cowley's is ſcarcely deſcrip-

tion,

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tion, unleſs it be poſſible to deſcribe by negatives; for he tells us only what there is not in Heaven. Taſſo endeavours to repreſent the ſplendours and pleaſures of the regions of happineſs. Taſſo affords images, and Cowley ſentiments. It happens, however, that Taſſo's deſcription affords ſome reaſon for Rymer's cenſure. He ſays of the Supreme Being,

> Hà ſotto i piedi e fato e la natura
> Miniſtri humili, e'l moto, e ch'il miſura.

The ſecond line has in it more of pedantry than perhaps can be found in any other ſtanza of the poem.

In the peruſal of the Davideis, as of all Cowley's works, we find wit and learning unprofitably ſquandered. Attention has no relief; the affections are never moved; we are ſometimes ſurprized, but never delighted, and find much to admire, but little to approve. Still however it is the work of Cowley, of a mind capacious by nature, and repleniſhed by ſtudy.

In the general review of Cowley's poetry it will be found, that he wrote with abundant fertility, but negligent or unſkilful ſelection; with much thought, but with little imagery; that he is never pathetick, and rarely ſublime; but always either ingenious or learned, either acute or profound.

It is ſaid by Denham in his elegy,

> To him no author was unknown,
> Yet what he writ was all his own.

This wide poſition requires leſs limitation, when it is affirmed of Cowley, than perhaps of any other poet.—He read much, and yet borrowed little.

His

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His character of writing was indeed not his own; he unhappily adopted that which was predominant. He saw a certain way to present praise; and, not sufficiently enquiring by what means the antients have continued to delight through all the changes of human manners, he contented himself with a deciduous laurel, of which the verdure in its spring was bright and gay, but which time has been continually stealing from his brows.

He was in his own time considered as of unrivalled excellence. Clarendon represents him as having taken a flight beyond all that went before him; and Milton is said to have declared, that the three greatest English poets were Spenser, Shakspeare, and Cowley.

His manner he had in common with others; but his sentiments were his own. Upon every subject he thought for himself; and such was his copiousness of knowledge, that something at once remote and applicable rushed into his mind; yet it is not likely that he always rejected a commodious idea merely because another had used it: his known wealth was so great that he might have borrowed without loss of credit.

In his elegy on Sir Henry Wotton, the last lines have such resemblance to the noble epigram of Grotius on the death of Scaliger, that I cannot but think them copied from it, though they are copied by no servile hand.

One passage in his *Mistress* is so apparently borrowed from Donne, that he probably would not have written it, had it not mingled with his own thoughts,

so

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ſo as that he did not perceive himſelf taking it from another:

Although I think thou never found wilt be,
  Yet I'm reſolv'd to ſearch for thee;
  The ſearch itſelf rewards the pains.
So, though the chymic his great ſecret miſs
(For neither it in Art or Nature is),
  Yet things well worth his toil he gains:
  And does his charge and labour pay
With good unſought experiments by the way.

COWLEY.

Some that have deeper digg'd Love's mine than I,
Say, where his centric happineſs doth lie:
  I have lov'd, and got, and told;
But ſhould I love, get, tell, till I were old,
I ſhould not find that hidden myſtery;
  Oh, 'tis impoſture all!
And as no chymic yet th' elixir got,
  But glorifies his pregnant pot,
  If by the way to him befal
Some odoriferous thing, or medicinal,
  So lovers dream a rich and long delight,
  But get a winter-ſeeming ſummer's night.

Jonſon and Donne, as Dr. Hurd remarks, were then in the higheſt eſteem.

It is related by Clarendon, that Cowley always acknowledges his obligation to the learning and induſtry of Jonſon: but I have found no traces of Jonſon in his works: to emulate Donne appears to have been his purpoſe; and from Donne he may have learned that familiarity with religious images, and that light alluſion to ſacred things, by which readers far ſhort of ſanctity are frequently offended; and which would not

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not be borne in the preſent age, when devotion, perhaps not more fervent, is more delicate.

Having produced one paſſage taken by Cowley from Donne, I will recompenſe him by another which Milton ſeems to have borrowed from him. He ſays of Goliah,

His ſpear, the trunk was of a lofty tree,
Which Nature meant ſome tall ſhip's maſt ſhould be.

Milton of Satan:

His ſpear, to equal which the talleſt pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the maſt
Of ſome great admiral, were but a wand,
He walked with.

His diction was in his own time cenſured as negligent. He ſeems not to have known, or not to have conſidered, that words being arbitrary muſt owe their power to aſſociation, and have the influence, and that only, which cuſtom has given them. Language is the dreſs of thought: and as the nobleſt mien, or moſt graceful action, would be degraded and obſcured by a garb appropriated to the groſs employments of ruſticks or mechanicks; ſo the moſt heroick ſentiments will loſe their efficacy, and the moſt ſplendid ideas drop their magnificence, if they are conveyed by words uſed commonly upon low and trivial occaſions, debaſed by vulgar mouths, and contaminated by inelegant applications.

Truth indeed is always truth, and reaſon is always reaſon; they have an intrinſic and unalterable value, and conſtitute that intellectual gold which defies deſtruction; but gold may be ſo concealed in baſer matter, that

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that only a chymist can recover it; sense may be so hidden in unrefined and plebeian words, that none but philosophers can distinguish it; and both may be so buried in impurities, as not to pay the cost of their extraction.

The diction, being the vehicle of the thoughts, first presents itself to the intellectual eye: and if the first appearance offends, a further knowledge is not often sought. Whatever professes to benefit by pleasing, must please at once. The pleasures of the mind imply something sudden and unexpected; that which elevates must always surprise. What is perceived by slow degrees may gratify us with consciousness of improvement, but will never strike with the sense of pleasure.

Of all this, Cowley appears to have been without knowledge, or without care. He makes no selection of words, nor seeks any neatness of phrase: he has no elegancies either lucky or elaborate: as his endeavours were rather to impress sentences upon the understanding than images on the fancy; he has few epithets, and those scattered without peculiar propriety or nice adaptation. It seems to follow from the necessity of the subject, rather than the care of the writer, that the diction of his heroic poem is less familiar than that of his slightest writings. He has given not the same numbers, but the same diction, to the gentle Anacreon and the tempestuous Pindar.

His versification seems to have had very little of his care; and if what he thinks be true, that his numbers are unmusical only when they are ill-read, the art of reading them is at present lost; for they are commonly harsh to modern ears. He has indeed

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many noble lines, ſuch as the feeble care of Waller never could produce. The bulk of his thoughts ſometimes ſwelled his verſe to unexpected and inevitable grandeur; but his excellence of this kind is merely fortuitous: he ſinks willingly down to his general careleſſneſs, and avoids with very little care either meanneſs or aſperity.

His contractions are often rugged and harſh:

One flings a mountain, and its rivers too
Torn up with 't.

His rhymes are very often made by pronouns, or particles, or the like unimportant words, which diſappoint the ear, and deſtroy the energy of the line.

His combination of different meaſures is ſometimes diſſonant and unpleaſing; he joins verſes together, of which the former does not ſlide eaſily into the latter.

The words *do* and *did*, which ſo much degrade in preſent eſtimation the line that admits them, were in the time of Cowley little cenſured or avoided; how often he uſed them, and with how bad an effect, at leaſt to our ears, will appear by a paſſage, in which every reader will lament to ſee juſt and noble thoughts defrauded of their praiſe by inelegance of language:

Where honour or where conſcience *does* not bind,
No other law ſhall ſhackle me;
Slave to myſelf I ne'er will be;
Nor ſhall my future actions be confin'd
By my own preſent mind.

Wha

Who by resolves and vows engag'd *does* stand
For days, that yet belong to fate,
Does like an unthrift mortgage his estate,
Before it falls into his hand;
The bondman of the cloister so,
All that he *does* receive *does* always owe.
And still as Time comes in, it goes away,
Not to enjoy, but debts to pay!
Unhappy slave, and pupil to a bell!
Which his hour's work as well as hours *does* tell:
Unhappy till the last, the kind releasing knell.

His heroic lines are often formed of monosyllables; but yet they are sometimes sweet and sonorous.

He says of the Messiah,

Round the whole earth his dreaded name shall sound,
And reach to worlds that must not yet be found.

In another place, of David,

Yet bid him go securely, when he sends;
'Tis Saul that is his foe, and we his friends.
The man who has his God, no aid can lack;
And we who bid him go, will bring him back.

Yet amidst his negligence he sometimes attempted an improved and scientifick versification; of which it will be best to give his own account subjoined to this line:

Nor can the glory contain itself in th' endless space.

"I am sorry that it is necessary to admonish the "most part of readers, that it is not by negligence "that this verse is so loose, long, and, as it were,

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" vaſt; it is to paint in the number the nature of " the thing which it deſcribes, which I would have " obſerved in divers other places of this poem, " that elſe will paſs for very careleſs verſes: as " before,

And ever-runs the neighb'ring fields with violent courſe.

" In the ſecond book;

Down a precipice deep, down he caſts them all.——

" And,

And fell a-down his ſhoulders with looſe care.

" In the third,

Braſs was his helmet, his boots braſs, and o'er
His breaſt a thick plate of ſtrong braſs he wore.

" In the fourth,

Like ſome fair pine o'er-looking all th' ignobler wood.

" And,

Some from the rocks caſt themſelves down headlong.

" And many more: but it is enough to inſtance in " a few. The thing is, that the diſpoſition of words " and numbers ſhould be ſuch, as that, out of the " order and ſound of them, the things themſelves " may be repreſented. This the Greeks were not ſo " accurate as to bind themſelves to; neither have " our Engliſh poets obſerved it, for aught I can " find. The Latins *(qui Muſas colunt ſeveriores)* ſome- " times did it; and their prince, Virgil, always: in " whom the examples are innumerable, and taken " notice

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"notice of by all judicious men, so that it is super-
"fluous to collect them."

I know not whether he has, in many of these instances, attained the representation or resemblance that he purposes. Verse can imitate only sound and motion. A *boundless* verse, a *headlong* verse, and a verse of *brass* or of *strong brass*, seem to comprise very incongruous and unsociable ideas. What there is peculiar in the sound of the line expressing *loose care*, I cannot discover; nor why the *pine* is *taller* in an Alexandrine than in ten syllables.

But, not to defraud him of his due praise, he has given one example of representative versification, which perhaps no other English line can equal;

Begin, be bold, and venture to be wise;
He, who defers this work from day to day,
Does on a river's bank expecting stay
Till the whole stream that stopp'd him shall be gone,
Which runs, and, as it runs, for ever shall run on.

Cowley was, I believe, the first poet that mingled Alexandrines at pleasure with the common heroick of ten syllables; and from him Dryden borrowed the practice, whether ornamental or licentious. He considered the verse of twelve syllables as elevated and majestick, and has therefore deviated into that measure when he supposes the voice heard of the Supreme Being.

The author of the Davideis is commended by Dryden for having written it in couplets, because he discovered that any staff was too lyrical for an heroick poem; but this seems to have been known before by *May* and *Sandys*, the translators of the Pharsalia and the Metamorphoses.

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In the Davideis are ſome hemiſtichs, or verſes left imperfect by the author, in imitation of Virgil, whom he ſuppoſes not to have intended to complete them: that this opinion is erroneous, may be probably concluded, becauſe this truncation is imitated by no ſubſequent Roman poet; becauſe Virgil himſelf filled up one broken line in the heat of recitation; becauſe in one the ſenſe is now unfiniſhed; and becauſe all that can be done by a broken verſe, a line interſected by a *cæſura*, and a full ſtop, will equally effect.

Of triplets in his Davideis he makes no uſe, and perhaps did not at firſt think them allowable; but he appears afterwards to have changed his mind, for in the verſes on the government of Cromwell he inſerts them liberally with great happineſs.

After ſo much criticiſm on his Poems, the Eſſays which accompany them muſt not be forgotten. What is ſaid by Sprat of his converſation, that no man could draw from it any ſuſpicion of his excellence in poetry, may be applied to theſe compoſitions. No author ever kept his verſe and his proſe at a greater diſtance from each other. His thoughts are natural, and his ſtyle has a ſmooth and placid equability, which has never yet obtained its due commendation. Nothing is far-ſought, or hard-laboured; but all is eaſy without feebleneſs, and familiar without groſſneſs.

It has been obſerved by Felton, in his Eſſay on the Claſſicks, that Cowley was beloved by every Muſe that he courted; and that he has rivalled the Ancients in every kind of poetry but tragedy.

It

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It may be affirmed, without any encomiaſtick fervour, that he brought to his poetick labours a mind replete with learning, and that his pages are embelliſhed with all the ornaments which books could ſupply; that he was the firſt who imparted to Engliſh numbers the enthuſiaſm of the greater ode, and the gaiety of the leſs; that he was equally qualified for ſpritely ſallies, and for lofty flights; that he was among thoſe who freed tranſlation from ſervility, and, inſtead of following his author at a diſtance, walked by his ſide; and that, if he left verſification yet improveable, he left likewiſe from time to time ſuch ſpecimens of excellence as enabled ſucceeding poets to improve it.

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DENHAM.

OF Sir JOHN DENHAM very little is known but what is related of him by Wood, or by himself.

He was born at Dublin in 1615; the only son of Sir John Denham, of Little Horsely in Essex, then chief baron of the Exchequer in Ireland, and of Eleanor, daughter of Sir Garret More, baron of Mellefont.

Two years afterwards, his father, being made one of the barons of the Exchequer in England, brought him away from his native country, and educated him in London.

In 1631 he was sent to Oxford, where he was considered "as a dreaming young man, given more to "dice and cards than study;" and therefore gave no prognosticks of his future eminence; nor was suspected to conceal, under sluggishness and laxity, a genius born to improve the literature of his country.

When he was, three years afterwards, removed to Lincoln's Inn, he prosecuted the common law with sufficient appearance of application; yet did not lose his

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his propenſity to cards and dice; but was very often plundered by gameſters.

Being ſeverely reproved for this folly, he profeſſed, and perhaps believed, himſelf reclaimed; and, to teſtify the ſincerity of his repentance, wrote and publiſhed "An Eſſay upon Gaming."

He ſeems to have divided his ſtudies between law and poetry; for, in 1636, he tranſlated the ſecond book of the Æneid.

Two years after, his father died; and then, notwithſtanding his reſolutions and profeſſions, he returned again to the vice of gaming, and loſt ſeveral thouſand pounds that had been left him.

In 1642, he publiſhed "The Sophy." This ſeems to have given him his firſt hold of the publick attention; for Waller remarked, "that he broke out "like the Iriſh rebellion, three-ſcore thouſand ſtrong, "when nobody was aware, or in the leaſt ſuſpected "it;" an obſervation which could have had no propriety, had his poetical abilities been known before.

He was after that pricked for ſheriff of Surrey, and made governor of Farnham Caſtle for the king; but he ſoon reſigned that charge, and retreated to Oxford, where, in 1643, he publiſhed "Cooper's "Hill."

This poem had ſuch reputation as to excite the common artifice by which envy degrades excellence.

A report was ſpread, that the performance was not his own, but that he had bought it of a vicar for forty pounds. The ſame attempt was made to rob Addiſon of Cato, and Pope of his Eſſay on Criticiſm.

In

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In 1647, the diſtreſſes of the royal family required him to engage in more dangerous employments. He was entruſted by the queen with a meſſage to the king; and, by whatever means, ſo far ſoftened the ferocity of Hugh Peters, that by his interceſſion admiſſion was procured. Of the king's condeſcenſion he has given an account in the dedication of his works.

He was afterwards employed in carrying on the king's correſpondence; and, as he ſays, diſcharged this office with great ſafety to the royaliſts: and, being accidentally diſcovered by the adverſe party's knowledge of Mr. Cowley's hand, he eſcaped happily both for himſelf and his friends.

He was yet engaged in a greater undertaking. In April, 1648, he conveyed James the Duke of York from London into France, and delivered him there to the queen and prince of Wales. This year he publiſhed his tranſlation of "Cato Major."

He now reſided in France, as one of the followers of the exiled king; and, to divert the melancholy of their condition, was ſometimes enjoined by his maſter to write occaſional verſes; one of which amuſements was probably his ode or ſong upon the Embaſſy to Poland, by which he and lord Crofts procured a contribution of ten thouſand pounds from the Scotch, that wandered over that kingdom. Poland was at that time very much frequented by itinerant traders, who, in a country of very little commerce and of great extent, where every man reſided on his own eſtate, contributed very much to the accommodation of life, by bringing to every man's houſe thoſe little neceſſaries which it was very inconvenient

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venient to want, and very troublesome to fetch. I have formerly read, without much reflection, of the multitude of Scotchmen that travelled with their wares in Poland; and that their numbers were not small, the success of this negociation gives sufficient evidence.

About this time, what estate the war and the gamesters had left him was sold, by order of the parliament; and when, in 1652, he returned to England, he was entertained by the Earl of Pembroke.

Of the next years of his life there is no account. At the Restoration he obtained that which many missed, the reward of his loyalty; being made surveyor of the king's buildings, and dignified with the order of the Bath. He seems now to have learned some attention to money; for Wood says, that he got by this place seven thousand pounds.

After the Restoration, he wrote the poem on Prudence and Justice, and perhaps some of his other pieces: and as he appears, whenever any serious question comes before him, to have been a man of piety, he consecrated his poetical powers to religion, and made a metrical version of the Psalms of David. In this attempt he has failed; but in sacred poetry who has succeeded?

It might be hoped that the favour of his master and esteem of the publick would now make him happy. But human felicity is short and uncertain; a second marriage brought upon him so much disquiet, as for a time disordered his understanding; and Butler lampooned him for his lunacy. I know not whether the malignant lines were then made publick,

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lick, nor what provocation incited Butler to do that which no provocation can excuſe.

His frenzy laſted not long *; and he ſeems to have regained his full force of mind; for he wrote afterwards his excellent poem upon the death of Cowley, whom he was not long to ſurvive; for on the 19th of March, 1668, he was buried by his ſide.

DENHAM is deſervedly conſidered as one of the fathers of Engliſh poetry. "Denham and Waller," ſays Prior, "improved our verſification, and Dry-"den perfected it." He has given ſpecimens of various compoſition, deſcriptive, ludicrous, didactick, and ſublime.

He appears to have had, in common with almoſt all mankind, the ambition of being upon proper occaſions *a merry fellow*, and in common with moſt of them to have been by nature, or by early habits, debarred from it. Nothing is leſs exhilarating than the ludicrouſneſs of Denham; he does not fail for want of efforts; he is familiar, he is groſs; but he is never merry, unleſs the "Speech againſt Peace in "the cloſe Committee" be excepted. For grave burleſque, however, his imitation of Davenant ſhews him to be well qualified.

Of his more elevated occaſional poems there is perhaps none that does not deſerve commendation. In the verſes to Fletcher, we have an image that has ſince been often adopted:

* In Grammont's Memoirs many circumſtances are related, both of his marriage and his frenzy, very little favourable to his character. R.

"But

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"But whither am I ſtray'd? I need not raiſe
"Trophies to thee from other men's diſpraiſe;
"Nor is thy fame on leſſer ruins built,
"Nor need thy juſter title the foul guilt
"Of eaſtern kings, who, to ſecure their reign,
"Muſt have their brothers, ſons, and kindred, ſlain."

After Denham, Orrery, in one of his prologues,

"Poets are ſultans, if they had their will;
"For every author would his brother kill."

And Pope,

"Should ſuch a man, too fond to rule alone,
"Bear like the Turk no brother near the throne."

But this is not the beſt of his little pieces: it is excelled by his poem to Fanſhaw, and his elegy on Cowley.

His praiſe of Fanſhaw's verſion of Guarini contains a very ſpritely and judicious character of a good tranſlator:

"That ſervile path thou nobly doſt decline,
"Of tracing word by word, and line by line.
"Thoſe are the labour'd birth of ſlaviſh brains,
"Not the effect of poetry, but pains;
"Cheap vulgar arts, whoſe narrowneſs affords
"No flight for thoughts, but poorly ſtick at words.
"A new and nobler way thou doſt purſue,
"To make tranſlations and tranſlators too.
"They but preſerve the aſhes; thou the flame,
"True to his ſenſe, but truer to his fame."

The excellence of theſe lines is greater, as the truth which they contain was not at that time generally known.

His

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His poem on the death of Cowley was his laſt, and, among his ſhorter works, his beſt performance: the numbers are muſical, and the thoughts are juſt.

"Cooper's Hill" is the work that confers upon him the rank and dignity of an original author. He ſeems to have been, at leaſt among us, the author of a ſpecies of compoſition that may be denominated *local poetry*, of which the fundamental ſubject is ſome particular landſcape, to be poetically deſcribed, with the addition of ſuch embelliſhments as may be ſupplied by hiſtorical retroſpection or incidental meditation.

To trace a new ſcheme of poetry has in itſelf a very high claim to praiſe, and its praiſe is yet more when it is apparently copied by Garth and Pope *; after whoſe names little will be gained by an enumeration of ſmaller poets, that have left ſcarcely a corner of the iſland not dignified either by rhyme, or blank verſe.

"Cooper's Hill," if it be maliciouſly inſpected, will not be found without its faults. The digreſſions are too long, the morality too frequent, and the ſentiments ſometimes ſuch as will not bear a rigorous enquiry.

The four verſes, which, ſince Dryden has commended them, almoſt every writer for a century paſt has imitated, are generally known:

"O could I flow like thee, and make thy ſtream
"My great example, as it is my theme!

* By Garth, in his "Poem on Claremont;" and by Pope, in his "Windſor Foreſt." H.

"Though

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"Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;
"Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full."

The lines are in themſelves not perfect; for moſt of the words, thus artfully oppoſed, are to be underſtood ſimply on one ſide of the compariſon, and metaphorically on the other; and if there be any language which does not expreſs intellectual operations by material images, into that language they cannot be tranſlated. But ſo much meaning is comprized in ſo few words; the particulars of reſemblance are ſo perſpicaciouſly collected, and every mode of excellence ſeparated from its adjacent fault by ſo nice a line of limitation; the different parts of the ſentence are ſo accurately adjuſted; and the flow of the laſt couplet is ſo ſmooth and ſweet; that the paſſage, however celebrated, has not been praiſed above its merit. It has beauty peculiar to itſelf, and muſt be numbered among thoſe felicities which cannot be produced at will by wit and labour, but muſt ariſe unexpectedly in ſome hour propitious to poetry.

He appears to have been one of the firſt that underſtood the neceſſity of emancipating tranſlation from the drudgery of counting lines and interpreting ſingle words. How much this ſervile practice obſcured the cleareſt and deformed the moſt beautiful parts of the ancient authors, may be diſcovered by a peruſal of our earlier verſions; ſome of them are the works of men well qualified, not only by critical knowledge, but by poetical genius, who yet, by a miſtaken ambition of exactneſs, degraded at once their originals and themſelves.

Denham

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Denham ſaw the better way, but has not purſued it with great ſucceſs. His verſions of Virgil are not pleaſing; but they taught Dryden to pleaſe better. His poetical imitation of Tully on "Old Age" has neither the clearneſs of proſe, nor the ſpritelineſs of poetry.

The "ſtrength of Denham," which Pope ſo emphatically mentions, is to be found in many lines and couplets, which convey much meaning in few words, and exhibit the ſentiment with more weight than bulk.

On the Thames.

"Though with thoſe ſtreams he no reſemblance hold,
"Whoſe foam is amber, and their gravel gold;
"His genuine and leſs guilty wealth t' explore,
"Search not his bottom, but ſurvey his ſhore."

On Strafford.

"His wiſdom ſuch, at once it did appear
"Three kingdoms' wonder, and three kingdoms' fear.
"While ſingle he ſtood forth, and ſeem'd, although
"Each had an army, as an equal foe,
"Such was his force of eloquence, to make
"The hearers more concern'd than he that ſpake:
"Each ſeem'd to act that part he came to ſee,
"And none was more a looker-on than he;
"So did he move our paſſions, ſome were known
"To wiſh, for the defence, the crime their own.
"Now private pity ſtrove with public hate,
"Reaſon with rage, and eloquence with fate."

On

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On Cowley.

"To him no author was unknown,
"Yet what he wrote was all his own;
"Horace's wit, and Virgil's ſtate,
"He did not ſteal, but emulate!
"And, when he would like them appear,
"Their garb, but not their cloaths, did wear."

As one of Denham's principal claims to the regard of poſterity ariſes from his improvement of our numbers, his verſification ought to be conſidered. It will afford that pleaſure which ariſes from the obſervation of a man of judgement, naturally right, forſaking bad copies by degrees, and advancing towards a better practice, as he gains more confidence in himſelf.

In his tranſlation of Virgil, written when he was about twenty-one years old, may be ſtill found the old manner of continuing the ſenſe ungracefully from verſe to verſe:

"Then all thoſe
"Who in the dark our fury did eſcape,
"Returning, know our borrow'd arms, and ſhape,
"And differing dialect; then their numbers ſwell
"And grow upon us; firſt Chorœbeus fell
"Before Minerva's altar; next did bleed
"Juſt Ripheus, whom no Trojan did exceed
"In virtue, yet the gods his fate decreed.
"Then Hypanis and Dymas, wounded by
"Their friends; nor thee, Pantheus, thy piety,
"Nor conſecrated mitre, from the ſame
"Ill fate could ſave; my country's funeral flame
"And Troy's cold aſhes I atteſt, and call
"To witneſs for myſelf, that in their fall

"No foes, no death, nor danger, I declin'd,
"Did and deserv'd no less, my fate to find."

From this kind of concatenated metre he afterwards refrained, and taught his followers the art of concluding their sense in couplets; which has perhaps been with rather too much constancy pursued.

This passage exhibits one of those triplets which are not unfrequent in this first essay, but which it is to be supposed his maturer judgement disapproved, since in his latter works he has totally forborn them.

His rhymes are such as seem found without difficulty, by following the sense; and are for the most part as exact at least as those of other poets, though now and then the reader is shifted off with what he can get:

"O how *transform'd!*
"How much unlike that Hector, who *return'd*
"Clad in Achilles' spoils!"

And again:

"From thence a thousand lesser poets *sprung*
"Like petty princes from the fall of *Rome.*"

Sometimes the weight of rhyme is laid upon a word too feeble to sustain it:

"Troy confounded falls
"From all her glories: if it might have stood
"By any power, by this right hand it *shou'd.*
"— And though my outward state misfortune *hath*
"Depreſt thus low, it cannot reach my faith."
"— Thus, by his fraud and our own faith o'ercome,
"A feigned tear destroys us, against *whom*
"Tydides nor Achilles could prevail,
"Nor ten years conflict, nor a thousand sail."

He

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He is not very careful to vary the ends of his verſes; in one paſſage the word *die* rhymes three couplets in ſix.

Moſt of theſe petty faults are in his firſt productions, where he was leſs ſkilful, or at leaſt leſs dextrous in the uſe of words; and though they had been more frequent, they could only have leſſened the grace, not the ſtrength of his compoſition. He is one of the writers that improved our taſte, and advanced our language, and whom we ought therefore to read with gratitude, though, having done much, he left much to do.

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MILTON.

THE life of Milton has been already written in ſo many forms, and with ſuch minute enquiry, that I might perhaps more properly have contented myſelf with the addition of a few notes on Mr. Fenton's elegant Abridgement, but that a new narrative was thought neceſſary to the uniformity of this edition.

JOHN MILTON was by birth a gentleman, deſcended from the proprietors of Milton, near Thame, in Oxfordſhire, one of whom forfeited his eſtate in the times of York and Lancaſter. Which ſide he took I know not; his deſcendant inherited no veneration for the White Roſe.

His grandfather John was keeper of the foreſt of Shotover, a zealous papiſt, who diſinherited his ſon, becauſe he had forſaken the religion of his anceſtors.

His father, John, who was the ſon diſinherited, had recourſe for his ſupport to the profeſſion of a ſcrivener. He was a man eminent for his ſkill in muſick, many of his compoſitions being ſtill to be found; and his reputation in his profeſſion was ſuch, that he grew rich,

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rich, and retired to an eſtate. He had probably more than common literature, as his ſon addreſſes him in one of his moſt elaborate Latin poems. He married a gentlewoman of the name of Caſton, a Welſh family, by whom he had two ſons, John, the poet, and Chriſtopher, who ſtudied the law, and adhered, as the law taught him, to the King's party, for which he was a while perſecuted, but having, by his brother's intereſt, obtained permiſſion to live in quiet, he ſupported himſelf ſo honourably by chamber-practices, that, ſoon after the acceſſion of King James, he was knighted and made a judge; but, his conſtitution being too weak for buſineſs, he retired before any diſreputable compliances became neceſſary.

He had likewiſe a daughter Anne, whom he married with a conſiderable fortune to Edward Philips, who came from Shrewſbury, and roſe in the Crown-office to be ſecondary: by him ſhe had two ſons, John and Edward, who were educated by the poet, and from whom is derived the only authentic account of his domeſtic manners.

John, the poet, was born in his father's houſe, at the Spread-Eagle in Bread-ſtreet, Dec. 9, 1608, between ſix and ſeven in the morning. His father appears to have been very ſolicitous about his education: for he was inſtructed at firſt by private tuition under the care of Thomas Young, who was afterwards chaplain to the Engliſh merchants at Hamburgh, and of whom we have reaſon to think well, ſince his ſcholar conſidered him as worthy of an epiſtolary elegy.

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He was then ſent to St. Paul's School, under the care of Mr. Gill; and removed, in the beginning of his ſixteenth year, to Chriſt's College in Cambridge, where he entered a ſizar *, Feb. 12, 1624.

He was at this time eminently ſkilled in the Latin tongue; and he himſelf, by annexing the dates to his firſt compoſitions, a boaſt of which the learned *Politian* had given him an example, ſeems to commend the earlineſs of his own proficiency to the notice of poſterity. But the products of his vernal fertility have been ſurpaſſed by many, and particularly by his contemporary Cowley. Of the powers of the mind it is difficult to form an eſtimate: many have excelled Milton in their firſt eſſays, who never roſe to works like *Paradiſe Loſt*.

At fifteen, a date which he uſes till he is ſixteen, he tranſlated or verſified two Pſalms, 114 and 136, which he thought worthy of the publick eye; but they raiſe no great expectations: they would in any numerous ſchool have obtained praiſe, but not excited wonder.

Many of his elegies appear to have been written in his eighteenth year, by which it appears that he had then read the Roman authors with very nice diſcernment. I once heard Mr. Hampton, the tranſlator of Polybius, remark, what I think is true, that

* In this aſſertion Dr. Johnſon was miſtaken. Milton was admitted a penſioner, and not a ſizar, as will appear by the following extract from the College Regiſter: "Johannes Milton "Londinenſis, filius Johannis, inſtitutus fuit in literarum ele- "mentis ſub Mag'ro Gill Gymnaſii Paulini præfecto, admiſſus eſt "*Penſionarius Minor* Feb. 12°, 1624, ſub M'ro Chappell, ſolvitq. "pro Ingr. £.0 10ſ 0d." R.

Milton

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Milton was the firſt Engliſhman who, after the revival of Letters, wrote Latin verſes with claſſick elegance. If any exceptions can be made, they are very few: Haddon and Aſcham, the pride of Elizabeth's reign, however they have ſucceeded in proſe, no ſooner attempt verſe than they provoke deriſion. If we produced any thing worthy of notice before the elegies of Milton, it was perhaps *Alabaſter's Roxana* *.

Of the exerciſes, which the rules of the Univerſity required, ſome were publiſhed by him in his maturer years. They had been undoubtedly applauded; for they were ſuch as few can perform; yet there is reaſon to ſuſpect that he was regarded in his college with no great fondneſs. That he obtained no fellowſhip is certain; but the unkindneſs with which he was treated was not merely negative. I am aſhamed to relate what I fear is true, that Milton was one of the laſt ſtudents in either univerſity that ſuffered the publick indignity of corporal correction.

It was, in the violence of controverſial hoſtility, objected to him, that he was expelled: this he ſteadily denies, and it was apparently not true; but it ſeems plain, from his own verſes to *Diodati*, that he had incurred *Ruſtication*, a temporary diſmiſſion into the country, with perhaps the loſs of a term.

Me tenet urbs refluâ quam Thameſis alluit undâ,
Meque nec invitum patria dulcis habet.
Jam nec arundiferum mihi cura reviſere Camum,
Nec dudum *vetiti* me *laris* angit amor.—

* Publiſhed 1632. R.

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Nec duri libet usque minas perferre magistri,
Cæteraque ingenio non subeunda meo.
Si sit hoc *exilium* patrios adiisse penates,
Et vacuum curis otia grata sequi,
Non ego vel *profugi* nomen sortemve recuso,
Lætus et *exilii* conditione fruor.

I cannot find any meaning but this, which even kindness and reverence can give the term, *vetiti laris*, "a habitation from which he is excluded;" or how *exile* can be otherwise interpreted. He declares yet more, that he is weary of enduring *the threats of a rigorous master, and something else, which a temper like his cannot undergo.* What was more than threat was probably punishment. This poem, which mentions his *exile*, proves likewise that it was not perpetual; for it concludes with a resolution of returning some time to Cambridge. And it may be conjectured, from the willingness with which he has perpetuated the memory of his exile, that its cause was such as gave him no shame.

He took both the usual degrees; that of Batchelor in 1628, and that of Master in 1632; but he left the university with no kindness for its institution, alienated either by the injudicious severity of his governors, or his own captious perverseness. The cause cannot now be known, but the effect appears in his writings. His scheme of education, inscribed to *Hartlib*, supersedes all academical instruction, being intended to comprise the whole time which men usually spend in literature, from their entrance upon grammar, *till they proceed, as it is called, Masters of Arts.* And in his Discourse *on the likeliest Way to remove Hirelings out of the Church*, he ingeniously

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niously proposes, that *the profits of the lands forfeited by the act for superstitious uses should be applied to such academies all over the land where languages and arts may be taught together; so that youth may be at once brought up to a competency of learning and an honest trade, by which means such of them as had the gift, being enabled to support themselves (without tithes) by the latter, may, by the help of the former, become worthy preachers.*

One of his objections to academical education, as it was then conducted, is, that men designed for orders in the Church were permitted to act plays, *writhing and unboning their clergy limbs to all the antick and dishonest gestures of Trincalos* *, *buffoons, and bawds, prostituting the shame of that ministry which they had, or were near having, to the eyes of courtiers and court-ladies, their grooms and mademoiselles.*

This is sufficiently peevish in a man, who, when he mentions his exile from the college, relates, with great luxuriance, the compensation which the pleasures of the theatre afford him. Plays were therefore only criminal when they were acted by academicks.

He went to the university with a design of entering into the church, but in time altered his mind; for he declared, that whoever became a clergyman must "subscribe slave, and take an oath withal,

* By the mention of this name, he evidently refers to Albumazar, acted at Cambridge in 1614. Ignoramus and other plays were performed at the same time. The practice was then very frequent. The last dramatick performance at either university was *The Grateful Fair*, written by Christopher Smart, and represented at Pembroke College, Cambridge, about 1747. R.

"which,

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"which, unless he took with a conscience that could "not retch, he must straight perjure himself. He "thought it better to prefer a blameless silence be-"fore the office of speaking, bought and begun "with servitude and forswearing."

These expressions are, I find, applied to the subscription of the Articles; but it seems more probable that they relate to canonical obedience. I know not any of the articles which seem to thwart his opinions: but the thoughts of obedience, whether canonical or civil, raised his indignation.

His unwillingness to engage in the ministry, perhaps not yet advanced to a settled resolution of declining it, appears in a letter to one of his friends, who had reproved his suspended and dilatory life, which he seems to have imputed to an insatiable curiosity, and fantastic luxury of various knowledge. To this he writes a cool and plausible answer, in which he endeavours to persuade him, that the delay proceeds not from the delights of desultory study, but from the desire of obtaining more fitness for his task; and that he goes on, *not taking thought of being late, so it gives advantage to be more fit.*

When he left the university he returned to his father, then residing at Horton in Buckinghamshire, with whom he lived five years, in which time he is said to have read all the Greek and Latin writers. With what limitations this universality is to be understood, who shall inform us?

It might be supposed, that he who read so much should have done nothing else; but Milton found time to write the Masque of *Comus*, which was presented at Ludlow, then the residence of the Lord Pre-

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President of Wales in 1634; and had the honour of being acted by the Earl of Bridgewater's sons and daughter. The fiction is derived from Homer's *Circe* * but we never can refuse to any modern the liberty of borrowing from Homer:

—— a quo ceu fonte perenni
Vatum Pieriis ora rigantur aquis.

His next production was *Lycidas*, an elegy, written in 1637, on the death of Mr. King, the son of

* It has nevertheless its foundation in reality. The earl of Bridgewater being President of Wales in the year 1634, had his residence at Ludlow-castle in Shropshire, at which time lord Brackly and Mr. Egerton, his sons, and lady Alice Egertnn, his daughter, passing through a place called the Hay-wood forest, or Haywood in Herefordshire, were benighted, and the lady for a short time lost: this accident being related to their father upon their arrival at his castle, Milton, at the request of his friend Henry Lawes, who taught music in the family, wrote this masque. Lawes set it to music, and it was acted on Michaelmas night; the two brothers, the young lady, and Lawes himself, bearing each a part in the representation.

The lady Alice Egerton became afterwards the wife of the earl of Carbury, who, at his seat called Golden-grove, in Caermarthenshire, harboured Dr. Jeremy Taylor in the time of the Usurpation. Among the doctor's sermons is one on her death, in which her character is finely portrayed. Her sister, lady Mary, was given in marriage to lord Herbert of Cherbury.

Notwithstanding Dr. Johnson's assertion, that the fiction is derived from Homer's Circe, it may be conjectured, that it was rather taken from the Comus of Erycius Puteanus, in which, under the fiction of a dream, the characters of Comus and his attendants are delineated, and the delights of sensualists exposed and reprobated. This little tract was published at Louvain in 1611, and afterwards at Oxford in 1634, the very year in which Milton's Comus was written. H.

Milton evidently was indebted to the *Old Wives Tale* of George Peele for the plan of Comus. R.

Sir

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Sir John King, ſecretary for Ireland in the time of Elizabeth, James, and Charles. King was much a favourite at Cambridge, and many of the wits joined to do honour to his memory. Milton's acquaintance with the Italian writers may be diſcovered by a mixture of longer and ſhorter verſes, according to the rules of Tuſcan poetry, and his malignity to the Church by ſome lines which are interpreted as threatening its extermination.

He is ſuppoſed about this time to have written his *Arcades*; for, while he lived at Horton, he uſed ſometimes to ſteal from his ſtudies a few days, which he ſpent at Harefield, the houſe of the counteſs dowager of Derby, where the *Arcades* made part of a dramatic entertainment.

He began now to grow weary of the country, and had ſome purpoſe of taking chambers in the Inns of Court, when the death of his mother ſet him at liberty to travel, for which he obtained his father's conſent, and Sir Henry Wotton's directions; with the celebrated precept of prudence, *i penſieri ſtretti, ed il viſo ſciolto*; "thoughts cloſe, and looks looſe."

In 1638 he left England, and went firſt to Paris; where, by the favour of Lord *Scudamore*, he had the opportunity of viſiting *Grotius*, then reſiding at the French court as ambaſſador from Chriſtina of Sweden. From Paris he haſted into Italy, of which he had with particular diligence ſtudied the language and literature; and though he ſeems to have intended a very quick perambulation of the country, ſtaid two months at Florence; where he found his way into the academies, and produced his compoſitions

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tions with ſuch applauſe as appears to have exalted him in his own opinion, and confirmed him in the hope, that, "by labour and intenſe ſtudy, which," ſays he, "I take to be my portion in this life, "joined with a ſtrong propenſity of nature," he might "leave ſomething ſo written to after-times, "as they ſhould not willingly let it die."

It appears, in all his writings, that he had the uſual concomitant of great abilities, a lofty and ſteady confidence in himſelf, perhaps not without ſome contempt of others; for ſcarcely any man ever wrote ſo much, and praiſed ſo few. Of his praiſe he was very frugal; as he ſet its value high, and conſidered his mention of a name as a ſecurity againſt the waſte of time, and a certain preſervative from oblivion.

At Florence he could not indeed complain that his merit wanted diſtinction. Carlo Dati preſented him with an encomiaſtic inſcription, in the tumid lapidary ſtyle; and Francini wrote him an ode, of which the firſt ſtanza is only empty noiſe; the reſt are perhaps too diffuſe on common topics: but the laſt is natural and beautiful.

From Florence he went to Sienna, and from Sienna to Rome, where he was again received with kindneſs by the Learned and the Great. Holſtenius, the keeper of the Vatican Library, who had reſided three years at Oxford, introduced him to Cardinal Barberini; and he, at a muſical entertainment, waited for him at the door, and led him by the hand into the aſſembly. Here Selvaggi praiſed him in a diſtich, and Salſilli in a tetraſtick; neither of them of much value. The Italians were gainers by this

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this literary commerce; for the encomiums with which Milton repaid Salfilli, though not ſecure againſt a ſtern grammarian, turn the balance indiſputably in Milton's favour.

Of theſe Italian teſtimonies, poor as they are, he was proud enough to publiſh them before his poems; though he ſays, he cannot be ſuſpected but to have known that they were ſaid *non tam de ſe, quam ſupra ſe.*

At Rome, as at Florence, he ſtaid only two months; a time indeed ſufficient, if he deſired only to ramble with an explainer of its antiquities, or to view palaces and count pictures; but certainly too ſhort for the contemplation of learning, policy, or manners.

From Rome he paſſed on to Naples, in company of a hermit, a companion from whom little could be expected; yet to him Milton owed his introduction to Manſo marquis of Villa, who had been before the patron of Taſſo. Manſo was enough delighted with his accompliſhments to honour him with a ſorry diſtich, in which he commends him for every thing but his religion: and Milton, in return, addreſſed him in a Latin poem, which muſt have raiſed an high opinion of Engliſh elegance and literature.

His purpoſe was now to have viſited Sicily and Greece; but, hearing of the differences between the king and parliament, he thought it proper to haſten home, rather than paſs his life in foreign amuſements while his countrymen were contending for their rights. He therefore came back to Rome, though the merchants informed him of plots laid

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against him by the Jesuits, for the liberty of his conversations on religion. He had sense enough to judge that there was no danger, and therefore kept on his way, and acted as before, neither obtruding nor shunning controversy. He had perhaps given some offence by visiting Galileo, then a prisoner in the Inquisition for philosophical heresy; and at Naples he was told by Manso, that, by his declarations on religious questions, he had excluded himself from some distinctions which he should otherwise have paid him. But such conduct, though it did not please, was yet sufficiently safe; and Milton staid two months more at Rome, and went on to Florence without molestation.

From Florence he visited Lucca. He afterwards went to Venice; and, having sent away a collection of musick and other books, travelled to Geneva, which he probably considered as the metropolis of orthodoxy.

Here he reposed as in a congenial element, and became acquainted with John Diodati and Frederick Spanheim, two learned professors of Divinity. From Geneva he passed through France; and came home, after an absence of a year and three months.

At his return he heard of the death of his friend Charles Diodati; a man whom it is reasonable to suppose of great merit, since he was thought by Milton worthy of a poem, intituled *Epitaphium Damonis*, written with the common but childish imitation of pastoral life.

He now hired a lodging at the house of one Russel, a taylor in St. Bride's Church-yard, and undertook the education of John and Edward Philips,

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lips, his ſiſter's ſons. Finding his rooms too little, he took a houſe and garden in Alderſgate-ſtreet *, which was not then ſo much out of the world as it is now; and choſe his dwelling at the upper end of a paſſage, that he might avoid the noiſe of the ſtreet. Here he received more boys, to be boarded and inſtructed.

Let not our veneration for Milton forbid us to look with ſome degree of merriment on great promiſes and ſmall performance, on the man who haſtens home, becauſe his countrymen are contending for their liberty, and, when he reaches the ſcene of action, vapours away his patriotiſm in a private boarding-ſchool. This is the period of his life from which all his biographers ſeem inclined to ſhrink. They are unwilling that Milton ſhould be degraded to a ſchool-maſter; but, ſince it cannot be denied that he taught boys, one finds out that he taught for nothing, and another that his motive was only zeal for the propagation of learning and virtue; and all tell what they do not know to be true, only to excuſe an act which no wiſe man will conſider as in itſelf diſgraceful. His father was alive; his allow-

* This is inaccurately expreſſed: Philips, and Dr. Newton after him, ſay a garden-houſe, i. e. a houſe ſituate in a garden, and of which there were, eſpecially in the north ſuburbs of London, very many, if not few elſe. The term is technical, and frequently occurs in the Athen. and Faſt. Oxon. The meaning thereof may be collected from the article Thomas Farnaby, the famous ſchoolmaſter, of whom the author ſays, that he taught in Goldſmith's Rents, in Cripplegate-pariſh, behind Redcroſs-ſtreet, where were large gardens and handſome houſes. Milton's houſe in Jewin-ſtreet was alſo a garden-houſe, as were indeed moſt of his dwellings after his ſettlement in London. H.

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ance was not ample; and he ſupplied its deficiencies by an honeſt and uſeful employment.

It is told, that in the art of education he performed wonders; and a formidable liſt is given of the authors, Greek and Latin, that were read in Alderſgate-ſtreet by youth between ten and fifteen or ſixteen years of age. Thoſe who tell or receive theſe ſtories ſhould conſider, that nobody can be taught faſter than he can learn. The ſpeed of the horſeman muſt be limited by the power of the horſe. Every man, that has ever undertaken to inſtruct others, can tell what ſlow advances he has been able to make, and how much patience it requires to recall vagrant inattention, to ſtimulate ſluggiſh indifference, and to rectify abſurd miſapprehenſion.

The purpoſe of Milton, as it ſeems, was to teach ſomething more ſolid than the common literature of Schools, by reading thoſe authors that treat of phyſical ſubjects; ſuch as the Georgick, and aſtronomical treatiſes of the ancients. This was a ſcheme of improvement which ſeems to have buſied many literary projectors of that age. Cowley, who had more means than Milton of knowing what was wanting to the embelliſhments of life, formed the ſame plan of education in his imaginary College.

But the truth is, that the knowledge of external nature, and the ſciences which that knowledge requires or includes, are not the great or the frequent buſineſs of the human mind. Whether we provide for action or converſation, whether we wiſh to be uſeful or pleaſing, the firſt requiſite is the religious and moral knowledge of right and wrong; the next is an acquaintance with the hiſtory of mankind,

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and with those examples which may be said to embody truth, and prove by events the reasonableness of opinions. Prudence and Justice are virtues and excellencies of all times and of all places; we are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians only by chance. Our intercourse with intellectual nature is necessary; our speculations upon matter are voluntary, and at leisure. Physiological learning is of such rare emergence, that one may know another half his life, without being able to estimate his skill in hydrostaticks or astronomy; but his moral and prudential character immediately appears.

Those authors, therefore, are to be read at schools that supply most axioms of prudence, most principles of moral truth, and most materials for conversation; and these purposes are best served by poets, orators, and historians.

Let me not be censured for this digression as pedantick or paradoxical; for, if I have Milton against me, I have Socrates on my side. It was his labour to turn philosophy from the study of nature to speculations upon life; but the innovators whom I oppose are turning off attention from life to nature. They seem to think, that we are placed here to watch the growth of plants, or the motions of the stars. Socrates was rather of opinion, that what we had to learn was, how to do good, and avoid evil.

Ὅτι τοι ἐν μεγάροισι κακοῦ ἀγαθοῦ τέτυκται.

Of institutions we may judge by their effects. From this wonder-working academy, I do not know that there ever proceeded any man very eminent for knowledge: its only genuine product, I believe,

is

is a ſmall Hiſtory of Poetry, written in Latin by his nephew Philips, of which perhaps none of my readers has ever heard *.

That in his ſchool, as in every thing elſe which he undertook, he laboured with great diligence, there is no reaſon for doubting. One part of his method deſerves general imitation. He was careful to inſtruct his ſcholars in religion. Every Sunday was ſpent upon theology; of which he dictated a ſhort ſyſtem, gathered from the writers that were then faſhionable in the Dutch univerſities.

He ſet his pupils an example of hard ſtudy and ſpare diet; only now and then he allowed himſelf to paſs a day of feſtivity and indulgence with ſome gay gentlemen of Gray's Inn.

He now began to engage in the controverſies of the times, and lent his breath to blow the flames of contention. In 1641 he publiſhed a treatiſe of *Reformation*, in two books, againſt the Eſtabliſhed Church; being willing to help the Puritans, who were, he ſays, *inferior to the Prelates in learning*.

Hall, biſhop of Norwich, had publiſhed an *Humble Remonſtrance*, in defence of Epiſcopacy; to which, in 1641, five miniſters †, of whoſe names the firſt letters made the celebrated word *Smectymnuus*, gave their Anſwer. Of this Anſwer a Confutation was

* "We may be ſure at leaſt, that Dr. Johnſon had never ſeen "the book he ſpeaks of; for it is entirely compoſed in Engliſh, "though its title begins with two Latin words, 'Theatrum Poe-"tarum; or, a compleat Collection of the Poets, &c.' a circum-"ſtance that probably miſled the biographer of Milton." *European Magazine, June* 1787, p. 388. R.

† Stephen Marſhall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, William Spurſtow. R.

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attempted by the learned *Usher*; and to the Confutation Milton published a Reply, intituled, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy, and whether it may be deduced from the Apostolical Times, by virtue of those Testimonies which are alledged to that Purpose in some late Treatises, one whereof goes under the Name of James Lord Bishop of Armagh.*

I have transcribed this title to shew, by his contemptuous mention of Usher, that he had now adopted the puritannical savageness of manners. His next work was, *The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy, by Mr. John Milton*, 1642. In this book he discovers, not with ostentatious exultation, but with calm confidence, his high opinion of his own powers; and promises to undertake something, he yet knows not what, that may be of use and honour to his country. "This," says he, "is "not to be obtained but by devout prayer to that "Eternal Spirit that can enrich with all utterance "and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim, with "the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify "the lips of whom he pleases. To this must be "added, industrious and select reading, steady ob-"servation, and insight into all seemly and gene-"rous arts and affairs; till which in some measure "be compast, I refuse not to sustain this expecta-"tion." From a promise like this, at once fervid, pious, and rational, might be expected the *Paradise Lost*.

He published the same year two more pamphlets, upon the same question. To one of his antagonists, who affirms that he was *vomited out of the University*, he answers, in general terms: "The Fellows of the "College

"College wherein I ſpent ſome years, at my part-
"ing, after I had taken two degrees, as the manner
"is, ſignified many times how much better it would
"content them that I ſhould ſtay. — As for the com-
"mon approbation or diſlike of that place, as now it
"is, that I ſhould eſteem or diſeſteem myſelf the more
"for that, too ſimple is the anſwerer, if he think to
"obtain with me. Of ſmall practice were the phy-
"ſician who could not judge, by what ſhe and her
"ſiſter have of long time vomited, that the worſer
"ſtuff ſhe ſtrongly keeps in her ſtomach, but the
"better ſhe is ever kecking at, and is queaſy; ſhe
"vomits now out of ſickneſs; but before it will be
"well with her, ſhe muſt vomit by ſtrong phyſick.
"The univerſity, in the time of her better health,
"and my younger judgment, I never greatly ad-
"mired, but now much leſs."

This is ſurely the language of a man who thinks that he has been injured. He proceeds to deſcribe the courſe of his conduct, and the train of his thoughts; and, becauſe he has been ſuſpected of incontinence, gives an account of his own purity: "That if I be juſtly charged," ſays he, "with this "crime, it may come upon me with tenfold ſhame."

The ſtyle of his piece is rough, and ſuch perhaps was that of his antagoniſt. This roughneſs he juſtifies, by great examples, in a long digreſſion. Sometimes he tries to be humourous: "Leſt I ſhould take "him for ſome chaplain in hand, ſome ſquire of the "body to his prelate, one who ſerves not at the altar "only, but at the Court-cupboard, he will beſtow on us "a pretty model of himſelf; and ſets me out half a do-"zen ptiſical mottoes, wherever he had them, hopping

3 you mean —

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"short in the measure of convulsion fits; in which "labour the agony of his wit having escaped narrowly, "instead of well-sized periods, he greets us with a "quantity of thumb-ring poesies. — And thus ends "this section, or rather dissection, of himself." Such is the controversial merriment of Milton; his gloomy seriousness is yet more offensive. Such is his malignity, *that hell grows darker at his frown.*

His father, after Reading was taken by *Essex*, came to reside in his house; and his school increased. At Whitsuntide, in his thirty-fifth year, he married Mary, the daughter of Mr. Powel, a justice of the peace in Oxfordshire. He brought her to town with him, and expected all the advantages of a conjugal life. The lady, however, seems not much to have delighted in the pleasures of spare diet and hard study; for, as Philips relates, "having for a month "led a philosophick life, after having been used at "home to a great house, and much company and "joviality, her friends, possibly by her own desire, "made earnest suit to have her company the remain-"ing part of the summer; which was granted, upon "a promise of her return at Michaelmas."

Milton was too busy to much miss his wife; he pursued his studies; and now and then visited the Lady Margaret Leigh, whom he has mentioned in one of his sonnets. At last Michaelmas arrived; but the lady had no inclination to return to the sullen gloom of her husband's habitation, and therefore very willingly forgot her promise. He sent her a letter, but had no answer: he sent more with the same success. It could be alledged that letters miscarry; he therefore dispatched a messenger, being by this

this time too angry to go himself. His messenger was sent back with some contempt. The family of the lady were Cavaliers.

In a man whose opinion of his own merit was like Milton's, less provocation than this might have raised violent resentment. Milton soon determined to repudiate her for disobedience; and, being one of those who could easily find arguments to justfy inclination, published (in 1644) *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*; which was followed by *The Judgement of Martin Bucer, concerning Divorce*; and the next year, his Tetrachordon, *Expositions upon the four chief Places of Scripture which treat of Marriage.*

This innovation was opposed, as might be expected, by the clergy, who, then holding their famous assembly at Westminster, procured that the author should be called before the Lords; "but "that house," says Wood, "whether approving the "doctrine, or not favouring his accusers, did soon "dismiss him."

There seems not to have been much written against him, nor any thing by any writer of eminence. The antagonist that appeared is styled by him, *A Serving Man turned Solicitor*. *Howel*, in his Letters, mentions the new doctrine with contempt; and it was, I suppose, thought more worthy of derision than of confutation. He complains of this neglect in two sonnets, of which the first is contemptible, and the second not excellent.

From this time it is observed, that he became an enemy to the Presbyterians, whom he had favoured before. He that changes his party by his humour is not more virtuous than he that changes

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it by his intereſt; he loves himſelf rather than truth.

His wife and her relations now found that Milton was not an unreſiſting ſufferer of injuries; and perceiving that he had begun to put his doctrine in practice, by courting a young woman of great accompliſhments, the daughter of one Doctor Davis, who was however not ready to comply, they reſolved to endeavour a re-union. He went ſometimes to the houſe of one Blackborough, his relation, in the lane of St. Martin's le-Grand, and at one of his uſual viſits was ſurpriſed to ſee his wife come from another room, and implore forgiveneſs on her knees. He reſiſted her intreaties for a while: "but partly," ſays Philips, "his own generous nature, more inclinable "to reconciliation than to perſeverance in anger or "revenge, and partly the ſtrong interceſſion of friends "on both ſides, ſoon brought him to an act of ob-"livion and a firm league of peace." It were injurious to omit, that Milton afterwards received her father and her brothers in his own houſe, when they were diſtreſſed, with other Royaliſts.

He publiſhed about the ſame time his *Areopagitica, a Speech of Mr.* John Milton *for the Liberty of unlicenſed Printing*. The danger of ſuch unbounded liberty, and the danger of bounding it, have produced a problem in the ſcience of government, which human underſtanding ſeems hitherto unable to ſolve. If nothing may be publiſhed but what civil authority ſhall have previouſly approved, power muſt always be the ſtandard of truth: if every dreamer of innovations may propagate his projects, there can be no ſettlement; if every murmurer at government may

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may diffuse discontent, there can be no peace; and if every sceptick in theology may teach his follies, there can be no religion. The remedy against these evils is to punish the authors; for it is yet allowed that every society may punish, though not prevent, the publication of opinions which that society shall think pernicious; but this punishment, though it may crush the author, promotes the book; and it seems not more reasonable to leave the right of printing unrestrained because writers may be afterwards censured, than it would be to sleep with doors unbolted, because by our laws we can hang a thief.

But whatever were his engagements, civil or domestick, poetry was never long out of his thoughts.

About this time (1645) a collection of his Latin and English poems appeared, in which the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, with some others, were first published.

He had taken a larger house in Barbican for the reception of scholars; but the numerous relations of his wife, to whom he generously granted refuge for a while, occupied his rooms. In time, however, they went away; "and the house again," says Philips, "now looked like a house of the Muses only, though "the accession of scholars was not great. Possibly "his having proceeded so far in the education of "youth may have been the occasion of his adversaries "calling him pedagogue and school-master; whereas "it is well known he never set up for a publick "school, to teach all the young fry of a parish; but "only was willing to impart his learning and know-"ledge to his relations, and the sons of gentlemen "who were his intimate friends, and that neither

"his

"his writings nor his way of teaching ever favoured "in the least of pedantry."

Thus laboriously does his nephew extenuate what cannot be denied, and what might be confessed without disgrace. Milton was not a man who could become mean by a mean employment. This, however, his warmest friends seem not to have found; they therefore shift and palliate. He did not sell literature to all comers at an open shop; he was a chamber-milliner, and measured his commodities only to his friends.

Philips, evidently impatient of viewing him in this state of degradation, tells us that it was not long continued; and, to raise his character again, has a mind to invest him with military splendour: "He "is much mistaken," he says, "if there was not "about this time a design of making him an adju-"tant-general in Sir William Waller's army. But "the new-modelling of the army proved an ob-"struction to the design." An event cannot be set at a much greater distance than by having been only *designed, about some time*, if a man *be not much mistaken.* Milton shall be a pedagogue no longer; for, if Philips be not much mistaken, somebody at some time designed him for a soldier.

About the time that the army was new-modelled (1645), he removed to a smaller house in Holbourn, which opened backward into Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. He is not known to have published any thing afterwards till the King's death, when, finding his murderers condemned by the Presbyterians, he wrote a treatise to justify it, and *to compose the minds of the people.*

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He made some *Remarks on the Articles of Peace between Ormond and the Irish Rebels.* While he contented himself to write, he perhaps did only what his conscience dictated; and if he did not very vigilantly watch the influence of his own passions, and the gradual prevalence of opinions, first willingly admitted, and then habitually indulged; if objections, by being overlooked, were forgotten, and desire superinduced conviction; he yet shared only the common weakness of mankind, and might be no less sincere than his opponents. But as faction seldom leaves a man honest, however it might find him, Milton is suspected of having interpolated the book called *Icon Basilike*, which the Council of State, to whom he was now made Latin secretary, employed him to censure, by inserting a prayer taken from *Sidney's Arcadia*, and imputing it to the King; whom he charges, in his *Iconoclastes*, with the use of this prayer, as with a heavy crime, in the indecent language with which prosperity had emboldened the advocates for rebellion to insult all that is venerable or great: "Who would have imagined so little fear in "him of the true all-seeing Deity — as, immedi-"ately before his death, to pop into the hands of the "grave bishop that attended him, as a special re-"lique of his saintly exercises, a prayer stolen word "for word from the mouth of a Heathen woman "praying to a Heathen God?"

The papers which the King gave to Dr. Juxon on the scaffold the regicides took away, so that they were at least the publishers of this prayer; and Dr. Birch,

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Birch, who had examined the question with great care, was inclined to think them the forgers. The use of it by adaptation was innocent; and they who could so noisily censure it, with a little extension of their malice could contrive what they wanted to accuse.

King Charles the Second, being now sheltered in Holland, employed Salmasius, professor of polite learning at Leyden, to write a defence of his father and of monarchy; and, to excite his industry, gave him, as was reported, a hundred Jacobuses. Salmasius was a man of skill in languages, knowledge of antiquity, and sagacity of emendatory criticism, almost exceeding all hope of human attainment; and having, by excessive praises, been confirmed in great confidence of himself, though he probably had not much considered the principles of society or the rights of government, undertook the employment without distrust of his own qualifications; and, as his expedition in writing was wonderful, in 1649 published *Defensio Regis*.

To this Milton was required to write a sufficient answer; which he performed (1651) in such a manner, that Hobbes declared himself unable to decide whose language was best, or whose arguments were worst. In my opinion, Milton's periods are smoother, neater, and more pointed; but he delights himself with teasing his adversary as much as with confuting him. He makes a foolish allusion of Salmasius, whose doctrine he considers as servile and unmanly, to the stream of *Salmasius*, which, whoever entered, left half his virility behind him. Salmasius was a French-

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Frenchman, and was unhappily married to a scold. *Tu es Gallus*, says Milton, &, *ut aiunt, nimium gallinaceus*. But his supreme pleasure is to tax his adversary, so renowned for criticism, with vitious Latin. He opens his book with telling that he has used *Persona*, which, according to Milton, signifies only a *Mask*, in a sense not known to the Romans, by applying it as we apply *Person*. But as Nemesis is always on the watch, it is memorable that he has enforced the charge of a solecism by an expression in itself grosly solecistical, when for one of those supposed blunders, he says, as *Ker*, and I think some one before him, has remarked, *propino te grammatistis tuis* vapulandum. From *vapulo*, which has a passive sense, *vapulandus* can never be derived. No man forgets his original trade: the rights of nations, and of kings, sink into questions of grammar, if grammarians discuss them.

Milton, when he undertook this answer, was weak of body and dim of sight; but his will was forward, and what was wanting of health was supplied by zeal. He was rewarded with a thousand pounds, and his book was much read; for paradox, recommended by spirit and elegance, easily gains attention; and he, who told every man that he was equal to his King, could hardly want an audience.

That the performance of Salmasius was not dispersed with equal rapidity, or read with equal eagerness, is very credible. He taught only the stale doctrine of authority, and the unpleasing duty of submission; and he had been so long not only the monarch but the tyrant of literature, that almost all man-

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mankind were delighted to find him defied and insulted by a new name, not yet considered as any one's rival. If Christina, as is said, commended the *Defence of the People*, her purpose must be to torment Salmasius, who was then at court; for neither her civil station, nor her natural character, could dispose her to favour the doctrine, who was by birth a queen, and by temper despotick.

That Salmasius was, from the appearance of Milton's book, treated with neglect, there is not much proof; but to a man, so long accustomed to admiration, a little praise of his antagonist would be sufficiently offensive, and might incline him to leave Sweden, from which however he was dismissed, not with any mark of contempt, but with a train of attendance scarcely less than regal.

He prepared a reply, which, left as it was imperfect, was published by his son in the year of the Restoration. In the beginning, being probably most in pain for his Latinity, he endeavours to defend his use of the word *persona*; but, if I remember right, he misses a better authority than any that he has found, that of Juvenal in his fourth satire:

> — Quid agas, cum dira & fœdior omni
> Crimine *Persona* est?

As Salmasius reproached Milton with losing his eyes in the quarrel, Milton delighted himself with the belief that he had shortened Salmasius's life, and both perhaps with more malignity than reason. Salmasius died at the Spa, Sept. 3, 1653; and, as controvertists are commonly said to be killed by their last dispute,

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pute, Milton was flattered with the credit of deſtroying him.

Cromwell had now diſmiſſed the parliament by the authority of which he had deſtroyed monarchy, and commenced monarch himſelf, under the title of Protector, but with kingly and more than kingly power. That his authority was lawful, never was pretended; he himſelf founded his right only in neceſſity; but Milton, having now taſted the honey of publick employment, would not return to hunger and philoſophy, but, continuing to exerciſe his office under a manifeſt uſurpation, betrayed to his power that liberty which he had defended. Nothing can be more juſt than that rebellion ſhould end in ſlavery; that he who had juſtified the murder of his king, for ſome acts which ſeemed to him unlawful, ſhould now ſell his ſervices, and his flatteries, to a tyrant, of whom it was evident that he could do nothing lawful.

He had now been blind for ſome years; but his vigour of intellect was ſuch, that he was not diſabled to diſcharge his office of Latin ſecretary, or continue his controverſies. His mind was too eager to be diverted, and too ſtrong to be ſubdued.

About this time his firſt wife died in child-bed, having left him three daughters. As he probably did not much love her, he did not long continue the appearance of lamenting her; but after a ſhort time married Catharine, the daughter of one captain Woodcock of Hackney; a woman doubtleſs educated in opinions like his own. She died, within a year, of childbirth, or ſome diſtemper that followed

it;

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it; and her husband honoured her memory with a poor sonnet.

The first reply to Milton's *Defensio Populi* was published in 1651, called *Apologia pro Rege & Populo Anglicano, contra Johannis Polypragmatici (alias Miltoni) defensionem destructivam Regis & Populi.* Of this the author was not known; but Milton and his nephew Philips, under whose name he published an answer so much corrected by him, that it might be called his own, imputed it to Bramhal; and, knowing him no friend to regicides, thought themselves at liberty to treat him as if they had known what they only suspected.

Next year appeared *Regii Sanguinis clamor ad Cœlum.* Of this the author was Peter du Moulin, who was afterwards prebendary of Canterbury; but Morus, or More, a French minister, having the care of its publication, was treated as the writer by Milton in his *Defensio Secunda,* and overwhelmed by such violence of invective, that he began to shrink under the tempest, and gave his persecutors the means of knowing the true author. Du Moulin was now in great danger; but Milton's pride operated against his malignity; and both he and his friends were more willing that Du Moulin should escape than that he should be convicted of mistake.

In this second Defence he shews that his eloquence is not merely satirical; the rudeness of his invective is equalled by the grossness of his flattery. "Deferimur, Cromuelle, tu solus superes, ad te summa "nostrarum rerum rediit, in te solo consistit, insu-"perabili tuæ virtuti cedimus cuncti, nemine vel "obloquente, nisi qui æquales inæqualis ipse honores "sibi

"sibi quærit, aut digniori concessos invidet, aut non "intelligit nihil esse in societate hominum magis vel "Deo gratum, vel rationi consentaneum, esse in "civitate nihil æquius, nihil utilius, quam potiri "rerum dignissimum. Eum te agnoscunt omnes, "Cromuelle, ea tu civis maximus & gloriosissimus *, "dux publici consilii, exercituum fortissimorum im-"perator, pater patriæ gessisti. Sic tu spontanea "bonorum omnium & animitus missa voce salu-"taris."

Cæsar, when he assumed the perpetual dictatorship, had not more servile or more elegant flattery. A translation may shew its servility; but its elegance is less attainable. Having exposed the unskilfulness or selfishness of the former government, "We were "left," says Milton, "to ourselves: the whole na-"tional interest fell into your hands, and subsists "only in your abilities. To your virtue, over-"powering and resistless, every man gives way, ex-"cept some who, without equal qualifications, aspire "to equal honours, who envy the distinctions of "merit greater than their own, or who have yet to "learn, that in the coalition of human society no-"thing is more pleasing to God, or more agreeable "to reason, than that the highest mind should have "the sovereign power. Such, Sir, are you by gene-"ral confession; such are the things atchieved by "you, the greatest and most glorious of our coun-"trymen, the director of our public councils, the

* It may be doubted whether *gloriosissimus* be here used with Milton's boasted purity. *Res gloriosa* is an *illustrious thing*; but *vir gloriosus* is commonly a *braggart*, as in *miles gloriosus*. Dr. J.

"leader of unconquered armies, the father of your "country; for by that title does every good man hail "you with ſincere and voluntary praiſe."

Next year, having defended all that wanted defence, he found leiſure to defend himſelf. He undertook his own vindication againſt More, whom he declares in his title to be juſtly called the author of the *Regii Sanguinis Clamor*. In this there is no want of vehemence or eloquence, nor does he forget his wonted wit. "Morus es? an Momus? an "uterque idem eſt?" He then remembers that *Morus* is Latin for a Mulberry-tree, and hints at the known transformation;

—Poma alba ferebat
Quæ poſt nigra tulit Morus.

With this piece ended his controverſies; and he from this time gave himſelf up to his private ſtudies and his civil employment.

As ſecretary to the Protector, he is ſuppoſed to have written the Declaration of the reaſons for a war with Spain. His agency was conſidered as of great importance; for, when a treaty with Sweden was artfully ſuſpended, the delay was publickly imputed to Mr. Milton's indiſpoſition; and the Swediſh agent was provoked to expreſs his wonder, that only one man in England could write Latin, and that man blind.

Being now forty-ſeven years old, and ſeeing himſelf diſencumbered from external interruptions, he ſeems to have recollected his former purpoſes, and to have reſumed three great works which he had planned for his future employment; an epick poem, the hiſtory

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history of his country, and a dictionary of the Latin tongue.

To collect a dictionary, seems a work of all others least practicable in a state of blindness, because it depends upon perpetual and minute inspection and collation. Nor would Milton probably have begun it, after he had lost his eyes; but, having had it always before him, he continued it, says Philips, *almost to his dying-day; but the papers were so discomposed and deficient, that they could not be fitted for the press.* The compilers of the Latin dictionary, printed at Cambridge, had the use of those collections in three folios; but what was their fate afterwards is not known*.

To compile a history from various authors, when they can only be consulted by other eyes, is not easy, nor possible, but with more skilful and attentive help than can be commonly obtained; and it was probably the difficulty of consulting and comparing that stopped Milton's narrative at the Conquest; a period at which

* The Cambridge Dictionary, published in 4to. 1693, is no other than a copy, with some small additions, of that of Dr. Adam Littleton in 1685, by sundry persons, of whom, though their names are concealed, there is great reason to conjecture that Milton's nephew, Edward Philips, is one; for it is expressly said by Wood, Fasti, vol. I. p. 266, that "Milton's Thesaurus" came to his hands; and it is asserted, in the preface thereto, that the editors thereof had the use of three large folios in manuscript, collected and digested into alphabetical order by Mr. John Milton.

It has been remarked, that the additions, together with the preface above-mentioned, and a large part of the title of the "Cambridge Dictionary," have been incorporated and printed with the subsequent editions of "Littleton's Dictionary," till that of 1735. Vid. Biogr. Brit. 2985, in not. So that, for aught that appears to the contrary, Philips was the last possessor of Milton's MS. H.

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affairs were not yet very intricate, nor authors very numerous.

For the subject of his epick poem, after much deliberation, *long chusing, and beginning late*, he fixed upon *Paradise Lost*; a design so comprehensive, that it could be justified only by success. He had once designed to celebrate King Arthur, as he hints in his verses to Mansus; but *Arthur was reserved*, says Fenton, *to another destiny* *.

It appears, by some sketches of poetical projects left in manuscript, and to be seen in a library † at Cambridge, that he had digested his thoughts on this subject into one of those wild dramas which were antiently called Mysteries; and Philips had seen what he terms part of a tragedy, beginning with the first ten lines of Satan's address to the Sun. These mysteries consist of allegorical persons; such as *Justice, Mercy, Faith*. Of the tragedy or mystery of *Paradise Lost* there are two plans:

The Persons.	The Persons.
Michael.	Moses.
Chorus of Angels.	Divine Justice, Wisdom, Heavenly Love.
Heavenly Love.	The Evening Star, Hesperus.
Lucifer.	Chorus of Angels.
Adam, Eve, } with the Serpent.	Lucifer.
Conscience.	

* *Id est*, to be the subject of an heroick poem, written by Sir Richard Blackmore. H.

† Trinity College. R.

Death.

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Death.		Adam.	
Labour,	Mutes.	Eve.	
Sickness,		Conscience.	
Discontent,		Labour,	Mutes.
Ignorance,		Sickness,	
with others;		Discontent,	
Faith.		Ignorance,	
Hope.		Fear,	
Charity.		Death,	
		Faith.	
		Hope,	
		Charity.	

Paradise Lost.

The Persons.

Moses, προλογίζει, recounting how he assumed his true body; that it corrupts not, because it is with God in the mount; declares the like with Enoch and Elijah; besides the purity of the place, that certain pure winds, dews, and clouds, preserve it from corruption; whence exhorts to the sight of God; tells they cannot see Adam in the state of innocence, by reason of their sin.

Justice, Mercy, Wisdom, } debating what should become of man, if he fall.

Chorus of Angels singing a hymn of the Creation.

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ACT II.

Heavenly Love.
Evening Star.
Chorus ſing the marriage-ſong, and deſcribe Paradiſe.

ACT III.

Lucifer contriving Adam's ruin.
Chorus fears for Adam, and relates Lucifer's rebellion and fall.

ACT IV.

Adam, } fallen.
Eve, }
Conſcience cites them to God's examination.
Chorus bewails, and tells the good Adam has loſt.

ACT V.

Adam and Eve driven out of Paradiſe.
——————— preſented by an angel with
Labour, Grief, Hatred, Envy, War, Famine, Peſtilence, Sickneſs, Diſcontent, Ignorance, Fear, Death, } Mutes.
To whom he gives their names. Likewiſe Winter, Heat, Tempeſt, &c.
Faith, Hope, Charity, } comfort him and inſtruct him.

Chorus briefly concludes.

Such

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Such was his first design, which could have produced only an allegory, or mystery. The following sketch seems to have attained more maturity.

Adam unparadised:

The angel Gabriel, either descending or entering; shewing, since this globe was created, his frequency as much on earth as in heaven; describes Paradise. Next, the Chorus, shewing the reason of his coming to keep his watch in Paradise, after Lucifer's rebellion, by command from God; and withal expressing his desire to see and know more concerning this excellent new creature, man. The angel Gabriel, as by his name signifying a prince of power, tracing Paradise with a more free office, passes by the station of the Chorus, and, desired by them, relates what he knew of man; as the creation of Eve, with their love and marriage. After this, Lucifer appears; after his overthrow, bemoans himself, seeks revenge on man. The Chorus prepare resistance on his first approach. At last, after discourse of enmity on either side, he departs: whereat the Chorus sings of the battle and victory in Heaven, against him and his accomplices: as before, after the first act, was sung a hymn of the creation. Here again may appear Lucifer, relating and insulting in what he had done to the destruction of man. Man next, and Eve having by this time been seduced by the Serpent, appears confusedly covered with leaves. Conscience in a shape accuses him; Justice cites him to a place whither Jehovah called for him. In the mean while, the Chorus entertains the stage, and is informed by some angel the

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manner of the fall. Here the Chorus bewails Adam's fall; Adam then and Eve return; accuſe one another; but eſpecially Adam lays the blame to his wife; is ſtubborn in his offence. Juſtice appears, reaſons with him, convinces him. The Chorus admoniſheth Adam, and bids him beware Lucifer's example of impenitence. The angel is ſent to baniſh them out of Paradiſe; but before cauſes to paſs before his eyes, in ſhapes, a maſk of all the evils of this life and world. He is humbled, relents, deſpairs; at laſt appears Mercy, comforts him, promiſes the Meſſiah; then calls in Faith, Hope, and Charity; inſtructs him; he repents, gives God the glory, ſubmits to his penalty. The Chorus briefly concludes. Compare this with the former draught.

Theſe are very imperfect rudiments of *Paradiſe Loſt*; but it is pleaſant to ſee great works in their ſeminal ſtate, pregnant with latent poſſibilities of excellence; nor could there be any more delightful entertainment than to trace their gradual growth and expanſion, and to obſerve how they are ſometimes ſuddenly advanced by accidental hints, and ſometimes ſlowly improved by ſteady meditation.

Invention is almoſt the only literary labour which blindneſs cannot obſtruct, and therefore he naturally ſolaced his ſolitude by the indulgence of his fancy, and the melody of his numbers. He had done what he knew to be neceſſarily previous to poetical excellence; he had made himſelf acquainted with *ſeemly arts and affairs*; his comprehenſion was extended by various knowledge, and his memory ſtored with intellectual treaſures. He was ſkilful in many languages, and had by reading and compoſition attained the full maſtery of

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of his own. He would have wanted little help from books, had he retained the power of perusing them.

But while his greater designs were advancing, having now, like many other authors, caught the love of publication, he amused himself, as he could, with little productions. He sent to the press (1658) a manuscript of Raleigh, called *The Cabinet Council*; and next year gratified his malevolence to the clergy, by a *Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Cases, and the Means of removing Hirelings out of the Church.*

Oliver was now dead; Richard was constrained to resign: the system of extemporary government, which had been held together only by force, naturally fell into fragments when that force was taken away; and Milton saw himself and his cause in equal danger. But he had still hope of doing something. He wrote letters, which Toland has published, to such men as he thought friends to the new commonwealth; and even in the year of the Restoration he *hated no jot of heart or hope*, but was fantastical enough to think that the nation, agitated as it was, might be settled by a pamphlet, called *A ready and easy Way to establish a free Commonwealth*; which was, however, enough considered to be both seriously and ludicrously answered.

The obstinate enthusiasm of the commonwealthmen was very remarkable. When the King was apparently returning, Harrington, with a few associates as fanatical as himself, used to meet, with all the gravity of political importance, to settle an equal government by rotation; and Milton, kicking when he could strike no longer, was foolish enough to publish,

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lish, a few weeks before the Restoration, *Notes* upon a sermon preached by one Griffiths, intituled, *The Fear of God and the King.* To these notes an answer was written by L'Estrange, in a pamphlet petulantly called *No Blind Guides:*

But whatever Milton could write, or men of greater activity could do, the King was now about to be restored with the irresistible approbation of the people. He was therefore no longer secretary, and was consequently obliged to quit the house which he held by his office; and, proportioning his sense of danger to his opinion of the importance of his writings, thought it convenient to seek some shelter, and hid himself for a time in Bartholomew-Close, by West-Smithfield.

I cannot but remark a kind of respect, perhaps unconsciously, paid to this great man by his biographers: every house in which he resided is historically mentioned, as if it were an injury to neglect naming any place that he honoured by his presence.

The King, with lenity of which the world has had perhaps no other example, declined to be the judge or avenger of his own or his father's wrongs; and promised to admit into the Act of Oblivion all, except those whom the Parliament should except; and the Parliament doomed none to capital punishment but the wretches who had immediately co-operated in the murder of the King. Milton was certainly not one of them; he had only justified what they had done.

This justification was indeed sufficiently offensive; and (June 16) an order was issued to seize Milton's *Defence*, and Goodwin's *Obstructors of Justice*, another book

book of the ſame tendency, and burn them by the common hangman. The attorney-general was ordered to proſecute the authors; but Milton was not ſeized, nor perhaps very diligently purſued.

Not long after (Auguſt 19) the flutter of innumerable boſoms was ſtilled by an act, which the King, that his mercy might want no recommendation of elegance, rather called an *Act of Oblivion* than of Grace. Goodwin was named, with nineteen more, as incapacitated for any public truſt; but of Milton there was no exception.

Of this tenderneſs ſhewn to Milton, the curioſity of mankind has not forborn to enquire the reaſon. Burnet thinks he was forgotten; but this is another inſtance which may confirm Dalrymple's obſervation, who ſays, "that whenever Burnet's narrations are "examined, he appears to be miſtaken."

Forgotten he was not; for his proſecution was ordered; it muſt be therefore by deſign that he was included in the general oblivion. He is ſaid to have had friends in the Houſe, ſuch as Marvel, Morrice, and Sir Thomas Clarges: and undoubtedly a man like him muſt have had influence. A very particular ſtory of his eſcape is told by Richardſon in his Memoirs, which he received from Pope, as delivered by Betterton, who might have heard it from Davenant. In the war between the King and Parliament, Davenant was made Priſoner and condemned to die; but was ſpared at the requeſt of Milton. When the turn of ſucceſs brought Milton into the like danger, Davenant repayed the benefit by appearing in his favour. Here is a reciprocation of generoſity and gratitude ſo pleaſing, that the

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the tale makes its own way to credit. But if help were wanted, I know not where to find it. The danger of Davenant is certain from his own relation; but of his escape there is no account. Betterton's narration can be traced no higher; it is not known that he had it from Davenant. We are told that the benefit exchanged was life for life; but it seems not certain that Milton's life ever was in danger. Goodwin, who had committed the same kind of crime, escaped with incapacitation; and, as exclusion from publick trust is a punishment which the power of government can commonly inflict without the help of a particular law, it required no great interest to exempt Milton from a censure little more than verbal. Something may be reasonably ascribed to veneration and compassion; to veneration of his abilities, and compassion for his distresses, which made it fit to forgive his malice for his learning. He was now poor and blind; and who would pursue with violence an illustrious enemy, depressed by fortune, and disarmed by nature *?

The publication of the Act of Oblivion put him in the same condition with his fellow-subjects. He was, however, upon some pretence now not known, in the custody of the serjeant in December; and

* A different account of the means by which Milton secured himself is given by an historian lately brought to light. "Milton, Latin secretary to Cromwell, distinguished by his writings "in favour of the rights and liberties of the people, pretended "to be dead, and had a publick funeral procession. The King "applauded his policy in escaping the punishment of death, by "a seasonable shew of dying." *Cunningham's History of Great Britain*, Vol. I. p. 14. R.

when

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when he was releaſed, upon his refuſal of the fees demanded, he and the ſerjeant were called before the Houſe. He was now ſafe within the ſhade of oblivion, and knew himſelf to be as much out of the power of a griping officer, as any other man. How the queſtion was determined is not known. Milton would hardly have contended, but that he knew himſelf to have right on his ſide.

He then removed to Jewin-ſtreet, near Alderſgate-ſtreet; and, being blind and by no means wealthy, wanted a domeſtick companion and attendant; and therefore, by the recommendation of Dr. Paget, married Elizabeth Minſhul, of a gentleman's family in Cheſhire, probably without a fortune. All his wives were virgins; for he has declared that he thought it groſs and indelicate to be a ſecond huſband: upon what other principles his choice was made cannot now be known; but marriage afforded not much of his happineſs. The firſt wife left him in diſguſt, and was brought back only by terror; the ſecond, indeed, ſeems to have been more a favourite, but her life was ſhort. The third, as Philips relates, oppreſſed his children in his life-time, and cheated them at his death.

Soon after his marriage, according to an obſcure ſtory, he was offered the continuance of his employment, and, being preſſed by his wife to accept it, anſwered, "You, like other women, want to "ride in your coach; my wiſh is to live and die an "honeſt man." If he conſidered the Latin ſecretary as exerciſing any of the powers of government, he that had ſhared authority, either with the Parliament or Cromwell, might have forborn to talk very loudly

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loudly of his honesty; and if he thought the office purely ministerial, he certainly might have honestly retained it under the King. But this tale has too little evidence to deserve a disquisition; large offers and sturdy rejections are among the most common topicks of falsehood.

He had so much either of prudence or gratitude, that he forbore to disturb the new settlement with any of his political or ecclesiastical opinions, and from this time devoted himself to poetry and literature. Of his zeal for learning in all its parts, he gave a proof by publishing, the next year (1661), *Accidence commenced Grammar*; a little book which has nothing remarkable, but that its author, who had been lately defending the supreme powers of his country, and was then writing *Paradise Lost*, could descend from his elevation to rescue children from the perplexity of grammatical confusion, and the trouble of lessons unnecessarily repeated.

About this time Elwood the Quaker, being recommended to him as one who would read Latin to him for the advantage of his conversation, attended him every afternoon except on Sundays. Milton, who, in his letter to Hartlib, had declared, that *to read Latin with an English mouth is as ill a hearing as Law French*, required that Elwood should learn and practise the Italian pronunciation, which, he said, was necessary, if he would talk with foreigners. This seems to have been a task troublesome without use. There is little reason for preferring the Italian pronunciation to our own, except that it is more general; and to teach it to an Englishman is only to make him a foreigner at home. He who travels, if he

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he ſpeaks Latin, may ſo ſoon learn the ſounds which every native gives it, that he need make no proviſion before his journey; and if ſtrangers viſit us, it is their buſineſs to practiſe ſuch conformity to our modes as they expect from us in their own countries. Elwood complied with the directions, and improved himſelf by his attendance; for he relates, that Milton, having a curious ear, knew by his voice when he read what he did not underſtand, and would ſtop him, and *open the moſt difficult paſſages.*

In a ſhort time he took a houſe in the *Artillery Walk*, leading to *Bunhill Fields*; the mention of which concludes the regiſter of Milton's removals and habitations. He lived longer in this place than any other.

He was now buſied by *Paradiſe Loſt*. Whence he drew the original deſign has been variouſly conjectured by men who cannot bear to think themſelves ignorant of that which, at laſt, neither diligence nor ſagacity can diſcover. Some find the hint in an Italian tragedy. Voltaire tells a wild and unauthoriſed ſtory of a farce ſeen by Milton in Italy, which opened thus: *Let the Rainbow be the Fiddleſtick of the Fiddle of Heaven.* It has been already ſhewn, that the firſt conception was a tragedy or myſtery, not of a narrative, but a dramatick work, which he is ſuppoſed to have begun to reduce to its preſent form about the time (1655) when he finiſhed his diſpute with the defenders of the King.

He long before had promiſed to adorn his native country by ſome great performance, while he had yet perhaps no ſettled deſign, and was ſtimulated only by ſuch expectations as naturally aroſe from the ſurvey of

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of his attainments, and the conſciouſneſs of his powers. What he ſhould undertake, it was difficult to determine. He was *long chuſing, and began late.*

While he was obliged to divide his time between his private ſtudies and affairs of ſtate, his poetical labour muſt have been often interrupted; and perhaps he did little more in that buſy time than conſtruct the narrative, adjuſt the epiſodes, proportion the parts, accumulate images and ſentiments, and treaſure in his memory, or preſerve in writing, ſuch hints as books or meditation would ſupply. Nothing particular is known of his intellectual operations while he was a ſtateſman; for, having every help and accommodation at hand, he had no need of uncommon expedients.

Being driven from all publick ſtations, he is yet too great not to be traced by curioſity to his retirement; where he has been found by Mr. Richardſon, the fondeſt of his admirers, ſitting *before his door in a grey coat of coarſe cloth, in warm ſultry weather, to enjoy the freſh air; and ſo, as in his own room, receiving the viſits of the people of diſtinguiſhed parts as well as quality.* His viſitors of high quality muſt now be imagined to be few; but men of parts might reaſonably court the converſation of a man ſo generally illuſtrious, that foreigners are reported, by Wood, to have viſited the houſe in Bread-ſtreet where he was born.

According to another account, he was ſeen in a ſmall houſe, *neatly enough dreſſed in black cloaths, ſitting in a room hung with ruſty green; pale but not cadaverous, with chalkſtones in his hands. He ſaid, that*

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that, if it were not for the gout, his blindness would be tolerable.

In the intervals of his pain, being made unable to use the common exercises, he used to swing in a chair, and sometimes played upon an organ.

He was now confessedly and visibly employed upon his poem, of which the progress might be noted by those with whom he was familiar; for he was obliged, when he had composed as many lines as his memory would conveniently retain, to employ some friend in writing them, having, at least for part of the time, no regular attendant. This gave opportunity to observations and reports.

Mr. Philips observes, that there was a very remarkable circumstance in the composure of *Paradise Lost*, "which I have a particular reason," says he, "to remember; for whereas I had the perusal of it "from the very beginning, for some years, as I "went from time to time to visit him, in parcels of "ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time (which, "being written by whatever hand came next, might "possibly want correction as to the orthography "and pointing), having, as the summer came on, "not been shewed any for a considerable while, "and desiring the reason thereof, was answered, "that his vein never happily flowed but from the "Autumnal Equinox to the Vernal; and that whatever he attempted at other times was never to his "satisfaction, though he courted his fancy never so "much; so that, in all the years he was about this "poem, he may be said to have spent half his time "therein."

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Upon this relation Toland remarks, that in his opinion Philips has mistaken the time of the year; for Milton, in his Elegies, declares, that with the advance of the Spring he feels the increase of his poetical force, *redeunt in carmina vires.* To this it is answered, that Philips could hardly mistake time so well marked; and it may be added, that Milton might find different times of the year favourable to different parts of life. Mr. Richardson conceives it impossible that *such a work should be suspended for six months, or for one. It may go on faster or slower, but it must go on.* By what necessity it must continually go on, or why it might not be laid aside and resumed, it is not easy to discover.

This dependance of the soul upon the seasons, those temporary and periodical ebbs and flows of intellect, may, I suppose, justly be derided as the fumes of vain imagination. *Sapiens dominabitur astris.* The author that thinks himself weather-bound will find, with a little help from hellebore, that he is only idle or exhausted. But while this notion has possession of the head, it produces the inability which it supposes. Our powers owe much of their energy to our hopes; *possunt quia posse videntur.* When success seems attainable, diligence is enforced; but when it is admitted that the faculties are suppressed by a cross wind, or a cloudy sky, the day is given up without resistance; for who can contend with the course of Nature?

From such prepossessions Milton seems not to have been free. There prevailed in his time an opinion, that the world was in its decay, and that we have had the misfortune to be produced in the decrepitude of

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of Nature. It was suspected that the whole creation languished, that neither trees nor animals had the height or bulk of their predecessors, and that every thing was daily sinking by gradual diminution *. Milton appears to suspect that souls partake of the general degeneracy, and is not without some fear that his book is to be written in *an age too late* for heroick poesy.

Another opinion wanders about the world, and sometimes finds reception among wise men; an opinion that restrains the operations of the mind to particular regions, and supposes that a luckless mortal may be born in a degree of latitude too high or too low for wisdom or for wit. From this fancy, wild as it is, he had not wholly cleared his head, when he feared lest the *climate* of his country might be *too cold* for flights of imagination.

Into a mind already occupied by such fancies, another not more reasonable might easily find its way. He that could fear lest his genius had fallen upon too old a world, or too chill a climate, might consistently magnify to himself the influence of the sea-

* This opinion is, with great learning and ingenuity, refuted in a book now very little known, "An Apology or Declaration "of the Power and Providence of God in the Government of "the World," by Dr. George Hakewill, London, folio, 1635. The first who ventured to propagate it in this country was Dr. Gabriel Goodman, bishop of Gloucester, a man of a versatile temper, and the author of a book entituled, "The Fall of Man, "or the Corruption of Nature proved by natural Reason." Lond. 1616 and 1624, quarto. He was plundered in the Usurpation, turned Roman Catholic, and died in obscurity. See Athen. Oxon. vol. I. p. 727. H.

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ſons, and believe his faculties to be vigorous only half the year.

His ſubmiſſion to the ſeaſons was at leaſt more reaſonable than his dread of decaying nature, or a frigid zone; for general cauſes muſt operate uniformly in a general abatement of mental power; if leſs could be performed by the writer, leſs likewiſe would content the judges of his work. Among this lagging race of froſty grovellers he might ſtill have riſen into eminence by producing ſomething which *they ſhould not willingly let die.* However inferior to the heroes who were born in better ages, he might ſtill be great among his contemporaries, with the hope of growing every day greater in the dwindle of poſterity. He might ſtill be a giant among the pygmies, the one-eyed monarch of the blind.

Of his artifices of ſtudy, or particular hours of compoſition, we have little account, and there was perhaps little to be told. Richardſon, who ſeems to have been very diligent in his enquiries, but diſcovers always a wiſh to find Milton diſcriminated from other men, relates, that "he would ſometimes "lie awake whole nights, but not a verſe could he "make; and on a ſudden his poetical faculty would "ruſh upon him with an *impetus* or *æſtrum*, and his "daughter was immediately called to ſecure what "came. At other times he would dictate perhaps "forty lines in a breath, and then reduce them to "half the number."

Theſe burſts of light, and involutions of darkneſs, theſe tranſient and involuntary excurſions and retroceſſions of invention, having ſome appearance of deviation from the common train of Nature, are eagerly

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eagerly caught by the lovers of a wonder. Yet ſomething of this inequality happens to every man in every mode of exertion, manual or mental. The mechanick cannot handle his hammer and his file at all times with equal dexterity; there are hours, he knows not why, when *his hand is out*. By Mr. Richardſon's relation, caſually conveyed, much regard cannot be claimed. That, in his intellectual hour, Milton called for his daughter *to ſecure what came*, may be queſtioned; for unluckily it happens to be known that his daughters were never taught to write; nor would he have been obliged, as is univerſally confeſſed, to have employed any caſual viſitor in diſburthening his memory, if his daughter could have performed the office.

The ſtory of reducing his exuberance has been told of other authors, and, though doubtleſs true of every fertile and copious mind, ſeems to have been gratuitouſly transferred to Milton.

What he has told us, and we cannot now know more, is, that he compoſed much of this poem in the night and morning, I ſuppoſe before his mind was diſturbed with common buſineſs; and that he poured out with great fluency his *unpremeditated verſe*. Verſification, free, like his, from the diſtreſſes of rhyme, muſt, by a work ſo long, be made prompt and habitual; and, when his thoughts were once adjuſted, the words would come at his command.

At what particular times of his life the parts of his work were written, cannot often be known. The beginning of the third book ſhews that he had loſt his ſight; and the Introduction to the ſeventh, that the return of the King had clouded him with diſ-

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countenance; and that he was offended by the licentious festivity of the Restoration. There are no other internal notes of time. Milton, being now cleared from all effects of his disloyalty, had nothing required from him but the common duty of living in quiet, to be rewarded with the common right of protection; but this, which, when he sculked from the approach of his King, was perhaps more than he hoped, seems not to have satisfied him; for no sooner is he safe, than he finds himself in danger, *fallen on evil days and evil tongues, and with darkness and with danger compass'd round.* This darkness, had his eyes been better employed, had undoubtedly deserved compassion; but to add the mention of danger was ungrateful and unjust. He was fallen indeed on *evil days*; the time was come in which regicides could no longer boast their wickedness. But of *evil tongues* for Milton to complain required impudence at least equal to his other powers; Milton, whose warmest advocates must allow, that he never spared any asperity of reproach or brutality of insolence.

But the charge itself seems to be false; for it would be hard to recollect any reproach cast upon him, either serious or ludicrous, through the whole remaining part of his life. He pursued his studies, or his amusements, without persecution, molestation, or insult. Such is the reverence paid to great abilities, however misused: they, who contemplated in Milton the scholar and the wit, were contented to forget the reviler of his King.

When the plague (1665) raged in London, Milton took refuge at Chalfont in Bucks; where Elwood, who had taken the house for him, first saw a complete

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plete copy of *Paradise Loſt*, and, having peruſed it, ſaid to him, "Thou haſt ſaid a great deal upon "*Paradiſe Loſt*; what haſt thou to ſay upon *Paradiſe* "*Found?*"

Next year, when the danger of infection had ceaſed, he retured to Bunhill fields, and deſigned the publication of his poem. A licence was neceſſary, and he could expect no great kindneſs from a chaplain of the archbiſhop of Canterbury. He ſeems, however, to have been treated with tenderneſs; for though objections were made to particular paſſages, and among them to the ſimile of the ſun eclipſed in the firſt book, yet the licence was granted; and he ſold his copy, April 27, 1667, to Samuel Simmons, for an immediate payment of five pounds, with a ſtipulation to receive five pounds more when thirteen hundred ſhould be ſold of the firſt edition; and again, five pounds after the ſale of the ſame number of the ſecond edition; and another five pounds after the ſame ſale of the third. None of the three editions were to be extended beyond fifteen hundred copies.

The firſt edition was of ten books, in a ſmall quarto. The titles were varied from year to year; and an advertiſement and the arguments of the books were omitted in ſome copies, and inſerted in others.

The ſale gave him in two years a right to his ſecond payment, for which the receipt was ſigned April 26, 1669. The ſecond edition was not given till 1674; it was printed in ſmall octavo; and the number of books was increaſed to twelve, by a diviſion of the ſeventh and twelfth; and ſome other ſmall improvements were made. The third edition

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was publiſhed in 1678; and the widow, to whom the copy was then to devolve, ſold all her claims to Simmons for eight pounds, according to her receipt given Dec. 21, 1680. Simmons had already agreed to transfer the whole right to Brabazon Aylmer for twenty-five pounds; and Aylmer ſold to Jacob Tonſon half, Auguſt 17, 1683, half, March 24, 1690, at a price conſiderably enlarged. In the hiſtory of *Paradiſe Loſt* a deduction thus minute will rather gratify than fatigue.

The ſlow ſale and tardy reputation of this poem have been always mentioned as evidences of neglected merit, and of the uncertainty of literary fame; and enquiries have been made, and conjectures offered, about the cauſes of its long obſcurity and late reception. But has the caſe been truly ſtated? Have not lamentation and wonder been laviſhed on an evil that was never felt?

That in the reigns of Charles and James the *Paradiſe Loſt* received no publick acclamations, is readily confeſſed. Wit and literature were on the ſide of the Court: and who that ſolicited favour or faſhion would venture to praiſe the defender of the regicides? All that he himſelf could think his due, from *evil tongues* in *evil days*, was that reverential ſilence which was generouſly preſerved. But it cannot be inferred, that his Poem was not read, or not, however unwillingly, admired.

The ſale, if it be conſidered, will juſtify the publick. Thoſe who have no power to judge of paſt times but by their own, ſhould always doubt their concluſions. The call for books was not in Milton's age what it is in the preſent. To read was not then a

general

general amuſement; neither traders, nor often gentlemen, thought themſelves diſgraced by ignorance. The women had not then aſpired to literature, nor was every houſe ſupplied with a cloſet of knowledge. Thoſe, indeed, who profeſſed learning, were not leſs learned than at any other time; but of that middle race of ſtudents who read for pleaſure or accompliſhment, and who buy the numerous products of modern typography, the number was then comparatively ſmall To prove the paucity of readers, it may be ſufficient to remark, that the nation had been ſatisfied from 1623 to 1664, that is, forty-one years, with only two editions of the works of Shakſpeare, which probably did not together make one thouſand copies.

The ſale of thirteen hundred copies in two years, in oppoſition to ſo much recent enmity, and to a ſtyle of verſification new to all and diſguſting to many, was an uncommon example of the prevalence of genius. The demand did not immediately increaſe; for many more readers than were ſupplied at firſt the nation did not afford. Only three thouſand were ſold in eleven years; for it forced its way without aſſiſtance; its admirers did not dare to publiſh their opinion; and the opportunities now given of attracting notice by advertiſements were then very few; the means of proclaiming the publication of new books have been produced by that general literature which now pervades the nation through all its ranks.

But the reputation and price of the copy ſtill advanced, till the Revolution put an end to the ſe-

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crecy of love, and *Paradise Loſt* broke into open view with ſufficient ſecurity of kind reception.

Fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton ſurveyed the ſilent progreſs of his work, and marked its reputation ſtealing its way in a kind of ſubterraneous current through fear and ſilence. I cannot but conceive him calm and confident, little diſappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with ſteady conſciouſneſs, and waiting without impatience the viciſſitudes of opinion, and the impartiality of a future generation.

In the mean time he continued his ſtudies, and ſupplied the want of ſight by a very odd expedient, of which Philips gives the following account:

Mr. Philips tells us, "that though our Author "had daily about him one or other to read, ſome "perſons of man's eſtate, who, of their own accord, "greedily catched at the opportunity of being his "readers, that they might as well reap the benefit "of what they read to him, as oblige him by the "benefit of their reading; and others of younger "years were ſent by their parents to the ſame end; "yet excuſing only the eldeſt daughter by reaſon of "her bodily infirmity and difficult utterance of "ſpeech (which, to ſay truth, I doubt was the "principal cauſe of excuſing her), the other two "were condemned to the performance of reading, "and exactly pronouncing of all the languages of "whatever book he ſhould, at one time or other, "think fit to peruſe, viz. the Hebrew (and I think "the Syriac), the Greek, the Latin, the Italian, "Spaniſh, and French. All which ſorts of books to "be confined to read, without underſtanding one "word,

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"word, muſt needs be a trial of patience almoſt be-
"yond endurance. Yet it was endured by both for
"a long time, though the irkſomeneſs of this em-
"ployment could not be always concealed, but broke
"out more and more into expreſſions of uneaſineſs;
"ſo that at length they were all, even the eldeſt
"alſo, ſent out to learn ſome curious and ingenious
"ſorts of manufacture, that are proper for women
"to learn, particularly embroideries in gold or
"ſilver."

In this ſcene of miſery which this mode of intellectual labour ſets before our eyes, it is hard to determine whether the daughters or the father are moſt to be lamented. A language not underſtood can never be ſo read as to give pleaſure, and very ſeldom ſo as to convey meaning. If few men would have had reſolution to write books with ſuch embarraſſments, few likewiſe would have wanted ability to find ſome better expedient.

Three years after his *Paradiſe Loſt* (1667), he publiſhed his *Hiſtory of England*, comprizing the whole fable of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and continued to the Norman Invaſion. Why he ſhould have given the firſt part, which he ſeems not to believe, and which is univerſally rejected, it is difficult to conjecture. The ſtyle is harſh; but it has ſomething of rough vigour, which perhaps may often ſtrike, though it cannot pleaſe.

On this hiſtory the licenſer again fixed his claws, and before he would tranſmit it to the preſs tore out ſeveral parts. Some cenſures of the Saxon monks were taken away, leſt they ſhould be applied to the modern clergy; and a character of the Long Parliament,

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ment, and Assembly of Divines, was excluded; of which the author gave a copy to the Earl of Anglesea, and which, being afterwards published, has been since inserted in its proper place.

The same year were printed *Paradise Regained*; and *Sampson Agonistes*, a tragedy written in imitation of the Ancients, and never designed by the author for the stage. As these poems were published by another bookseller, it has been asked, whether Simmons was discouraged from receiving them by the slow sale of the former. Why a writer changed his bookseller a hundred years ago, I am far from hoping to discover. Certainly, he who in two years sells thirteen hundred copies of a volume in quarto, bought for two payments of five pounds each, has no reason to repent his purchase.

When Miton shewed *Paradise Regained* to Elwood, "This," said he, "is owing to you; for you "put it in my head by the question you put to me "at Chalfont, which otherwise I had not thought "of."

His last poetical offspring was his favourite. He could not, as Elwood relates, endure to hear *Paradise Lost* preferred to *Paradise Regained*. Many causes may vitiate a writer's judgement of his own works. On that which has cost him much labour he sets a high value, because he is unwilling to think that he has been diligent in vain; what has been produced without toilsome efforts is considered with delight, as a proof of vigorous faculties and fertile invention; and the last work, whatever it be, has necessarily most of the grace of novelty. Milton, however it hap-

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happened, had this prejudice, and had it to himself.

To that multiplicity of attainments, and extent of comprehension, that entitled this great author to our veneration, may be added a kind of humble dignity, which did not disdain the meanest services to literature. The epic poet, the controvertist, the politician, having already descended to accommodate children with a book of rudiments, now, in the last years of his life, composed a book of Logick for the initiation of students in philosophy; and published (1672) *Artis Logicæ plenior Institutio ad Petri Rami Methodum concinnata*; that is, "A new Scheme of "Logick, according to the Method of Ramus." I know not whether, even in this book, he did not intend an act of hostility against the Universities; for Ramus was one of the first oppugners of the old philosophy, who disturbed with innovations the quiet of the schools.

His polemical disposition again revived. He had now been safe so long, that he forgot his fears, and published a *Treatise of true Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, and the best Means to prevent the Growth of Popery.*

But this little tract is modestly written, with respectful mention of the Church of England, and an appeal to the Thirty-nine Articles. His principle of toleration is, agreement in the sufficiency of the Scriptures; and he extends it to all who, whatever their opinions are, profess to derive them from the sacred books. The Papists appeal to other testimonies, and are therefore, in his opinion, not to be permitted the liberty of either publick or private worship;

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ſhip; for though they plead conſcience, *we have no warrant*, he ſays, *to regard conſcience, which is not grounded in Scripture.*

Thoſe who are not convinced by his reaſons, may be perhaps delighted with his wit. The term *Roman Catholick* is, he ſays, *one of the Pope's bulls; it is particular univerſal*, or *catholic ſchiſmatick.*

He has, however, ſomething better. As the beſt preſervative againſt Popery, he recommends the diligent peruſal of the Scriptures, a duty, from which he warns the buſy part of mankind not to think themſelves excuſed.

He now reprinted his juvenile poems, with ſome additions.

In the laſt year of his life he ſent to the preſs, ſeeming to take delight in publication, a collection of Familiar Epiſtles in Latin; to which, being too few to make a volume, he added ſome academical exerciſes, which perhaps he peruſed with pleaſure, as they recalled to his memory the days of youth, but for which nothing but veneration for his name could now procure a reader.

When he had attained his ſixty-ſixth year, the gout, with which he had been long tormented, prevailed over the enfeebled powers of nature. He died by a quiet and ſilent expiration, about the tenth of November, 1674, at his houſe in Bunhill-fields; and was buried next his father in the chancel of St. Giles at Cripplegate. His funeral was very ſplendidly and numerouſly attended.

Upon his grave there is ſuppoſed to have been no memorial; but in our time a monument has been erected in Weſtminſter-Abbey *To the Author of Paradiſe*

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dise Loſt, by Mr. Benſon, who has in the inſcription beſtowed more words upon himſelf than upon Milton.

When the inſcription for the monument of Philips, in which he was ſaid to be *ſoli Miltono ſecundus*, was exhibited to Dr. Sprat, then dean of Weſtminſter, he refuſed to admit it; the name of Milton was, in his opinion, too deteſtable to be read on the wall of a building dedicated to devotion. Atterbury, who ſucceeded him, being author of the inſcription, permitted its reception. "And ſuch has been the "change of publick opinion," ſaid Dr. Gregory, from whom I heard this account, "that I have ſeen "erected in the church a ſtatue of that man, whoſe "name I once knew conſidered as a pollution of its "walls."

Milton has the reputation of having been in his youth eminently beautiful, ſo as to have been called the Lady of his college. His hair, which was of a light brown, parted at the fore-top, and hung down upon his ſhoulders, according to the picture which he has given of Adam. He was, however, not of the heroick ſtature, but rather below the middle ſize, according to Mr. Richardſon, who mentions him as having narrowly eſcaped from being *ſhort and thick*. He was vigorous and active, and delighted in the exerciſe of the ſword, in which he is related to have been eminently ſkilful. His weapon was, I believe, not the rapier, but the back-ſword, of which he recommends the uſe in his book on Education.

His eyes are ſaid never to have been bright; but, if he was a dexterous fencer, they muſt have been once quick.

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His domeſtick habits, ſo far as they are known, were thoſe of a ſevere ſtudent. He drank little ſtrong drink of any kind, and fed without exceſs in quantity, and in his earlier years without delicacy of choice. In his youth he ſtudied late at night; but afterwards changed his hours, and reſted in bed from nine to four in the ſummer, and five in the winter. The courſe of his day was beſt known after he was blind. When he firſt roſe, he heard a chapter in the Hebrew Bible, and then ſtudied till twelve; then took ſome exerciſe for an hour; then dined, then played on the organ, and ſang, or heard another ſing, then ſtudied to ſix; then entertained his viſitors till eight; then ſupped, and, after a pipe of tobacco and a glaſs of water, went to bed.

So is his life deſcribed: but this even tenour appears attainable only in colleges. He that lives in the world will ſometimes have the ſucceſſion of his practice broken and confuſed. Viſitors, of whom Milton is repreſented to have had great numbers, will come and ſtay unſeaſonably; buſineſs, of which every man has ſome, muſt be done when others will do it.

When he did not care to riſe early, he had ſomething read to him by his bedſide; perhaps at this time his daughters were employed. He compoſed much in the morning, and dictated in the day, ſitting obliquely in an elbow-chair, with his leg thrown over the arm.

Fortune appears not to have had much of his care. In the civil wars he lent his perſonal eſtate to the Parliament; but when, after the conteſt was decided, he ſolicited repayment, he met not only with neglect, but

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but *sharp rebuke*; and, having tired both himself and his friends, was given up to poverty and hopeless indignation, till he shewed how able he was to do greater service. He was then made Latin secretary, with two hundred pounds a year; and had a thousand pounds for his *Defence of the People*. His widow who, after his death, retired to Namptwich in Cheshire, and died about 1729, is said to have reported that he lost two thousand pounds by entrusting it to a scrivener; and that, in the general depredation upon the Church, he had grasped an estate of about sixty pounds a year belonging to Westminster-Abbey, which, like other sharers of the plunder of rebellion, he was afterwards obliged to return. Two thousands pounds, which he had placed in the Excise-office, were also lost. There is yet no reason to believe that he was ever reduced to indigence. His wants, being few, were competently supplied. He sold his library before his death, and left his family fifteen hundred pounds, on which his widow laid hold, and only gave one hundred to each of his daughters.

His literature was unquestionably great. He read all the languages which are considered either as learned or polite; Hebrew, with its two dialects, Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish. In Latin his skill was such as places him in the first rank of writers and criticks; and he appears to have cultivated Italian with uncommon diligence. The books in which his daughter, who used to read to him, represented him as most delighting, after Homer, which he could almost repeat, were Ovid's Meta-

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morphoſes and Euripides. His Euripides is, by Mr. Cradock's kindneſs, now in my hands: the margin is ſometimes noted; but I have found nothing remarkable.

Of the Engliſh poets he ſet moſt value upon Spenſer, Shakſpeare, and Cowley. Spenſer was apparently his favourite; Shakſpeare he may eaſily be ſuppoſed to like, with every other ſkilful reader; but I ſhould not have expected that Cowley, whoſe ideas of excellence were ſo different from his own, would have had much of his approbation. His character of Dryden, who ſometimes viſited him, was, that he was a good rhymiſt, but no poet.

His theological opinions are ſaid to have been firſt Calviniſtical; and afterwards, perhaps when he began to hate the Preſbyterians, to have tended towards Arminianiſm. In the mixed queſtions of theology and government, he never thinks that he can recede far enough from popery, or prelacy: but what Baudius ſays of Eraſmus ſeems applicable to him, *magis habuit quod fugeret, quam quod ſequeretur.* He had determined rather what to condemn, than what to approve. He has not aſſociated himſelf with any denomination of Proteſtants: we know rather what he was not, than what he was. He was not of the Church of Rome; he was not of the Church of England.

To be of no Church is dangerous. Religion, of which the rewards are diſtant, and which is animated only by Faith and Hope, will glide by degrees out of the mind, unleſs it be invigorated and reimpreſſed by external ordinances, by ſtated calls to worſhip, and the

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the ſalutary influence of example. Milton, who appears to have had full conviction of the truth of Chriſtianity, and to have regarded the Holy Scriptures with the profoundeſt veneration, to have been untainted by any heretical peculiarity of opinion, and to have lived in a confirmed belief of the immediate and occaſional agency of Providence, yet grew old without any viſible worſhip. In the diſtribution of his hours, there was no hour of prayer, either ſolitary or with his houſhold; omitting publick prayers, he omitted all.

Of this omiſſion the reaſon has been ſought upon a ſuppoſition which ought never to be made, that men live with their own approbation, and juſtify their conduct to themſelves. Prayer certainly was not thought ſuperfluous by him, who repreſents our firſt parents as praying acceptably in the ſtate of innocence, and efficaciouſly after their fall. That he lived without prayer can hardly be affirmed; his ſtudies and meditations were an habitual prayer. The neglect of it in his family was probably a fault for which he condemned himſelf, and which he intended to correct, but that death, as too often happens, intercepted his reformation.

His political notions were thoſe of an acrimonious and ſurly republican, for which it is not known that he gave any better reaſon than that *a popular government was the moſt frugal; for the trappings of a monarchy would ſet up an ordinary commonwealth.* It is ſurely very ſhallow policy that ſuppoſes money to be the chief good: and even this, without conſidering that the ſupport and expence of a Court is, for

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the moſt part, only a particular kind of traffick, for which money is circulated, without any national impoveriſhment.

Milton's republicaniſm was, I am afraid, founded in an envious hatred of greatneſs, and a ſullen deſire of independence; in petulance impatient of controul, and pride diſdainful of ſuperiority. He hated monarchs in the State, and prelates in the Church; for he hated all whom he was required to obey. It is to be ſuſpected, that his predominant deſire was to deſtroy rather than eſtabliſh, and that he felt not ſo much the love of liberty as repugnance to authority.

It has been obſerved, that they who moſt loudly clamour for liberty do not moſt liberally grant it. What we know of Milton's character, in domeſtick relations, is, that he was ſevere and arbitrary. His family conſiſted of women; and there appears in his books ſomething like a Turkiſh contempt of females, as ſubordinate and inferior beings. That his own daughters might not break the ranks, he ſuffered them to be depreſſed by a mean and penurious education. He thought women made only for obedience, and man only for rebellion.

Of his family ſome account may be expected. His ſiſter, firſt married to Mr. Philips, afterwards married to Mr. Agar, a friend of her firſt huſband, who ſucceeded him in the Crown-office. She had, by her firſt huſband, Edward and John, the two nephews whom Milton educated; and, by her ſecond, two daughters.

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His brother, Sir Chriſtopher, had two daughters, Mary and Catharine *; and a ſon Thomas, who ſucceeded Agar in the Crown-office, and left a daughter living in 1749 in Groſvenor-ſtreet.

Milton had children only by his firſt wife; Anne, Mary, and Deborah. Anne, though deformed, married a maſter-builder, and died of her firſt child. Mary died ſingle. Deborah married Abraham Clark, a weaver in Spital-fields, and lived ſeventy-ſix years, to Auguſt 1727. This is the daughter of whom publick mention has been made. She could repeat the firſt lines of Homer, the Metamorphoſes, and ſome of Euripides, by having often read them. Yet here incredulity is ready to make a ſtand. Many repetitions are neceſſary to fix in the memory lines not underſtood; and why ſhould Milton wiſh or want to hear them ſo often? Theſe lines were at the beginning of the poems. Of a book written in a language not underſtood, the beginning raiſes no more attention than the end; and as thoſe that underſtand it know commonly the beginning beſt, its rehearſal will ſeldom be neceſſary. It is not likely that Milton required any paſſage to be ſo much repeated as that

* Both theſe perſons were living at Holloway about the year 1734, and at that time poſſeſſed ſuch a degree of health and ſtrength as enabled them on Sundays and Prayer-days to walk a mile up a ſteep hill to Highgate chapel. One of them was Ninety-two at the time of her death. Their parentage was known to few, and their names were corrupted into Melton. By the Crown-office mentioned in the two laſt paragraphs, we are to underſtand the Crown-office of the Court of Chaneery. H.

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his daughter could learn it; nor likely that he desired the initial lines to be read at all; nor that the daughter, weary of the drudgery of pronouncing unideal sounds, would voluntarily commit them to memory.

To this gentlewoman Addison made a present, and promised some establishment, but died soon after. Queen Caroline sent her fifty guineas. She had seven sons and three daughters; but none of them had any children, except her son Caleb and her daughter Elizabeth. Caleb went to Fort St. George in the East Indies, and had two sons, of whom nothing is now known. Elizabeth married Thomas Foster, a weaver in Spital-fields; and had seven children, who all died. She kept a petty grocer's or chandler's shop, first at Holloway, and afterwards in Cock-lane, near Shoreditch Church. She knew little of her grandfather, and that little was not good. She told of his harshness to his daughters, and his refusal to have them taught to write; and, in opposition to other accounts, represented him as delicate, though temperate, in his diet.

In 1750, April 5, *Comus* was played for her benefit. She had so little acquaintance with diversion or gaiety, that she did not know what was intended when a benefit was offered her. The profits of the night were only one hundred and thirty pounds, though Dr. Newton brought a large contribution; and twenty pounds were given by Tonson, a man who is to be praised as often as he is named. Of this sum one hundred pounds were placed in the stocks,

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ſtocks, after ſome debate between her and her huſband in whoſe name it ſhould be entered; and the reſt augmented their little ſtock, with which they removed to Iſlington. This was the greateſt benefaction that *Paradiſe Loſt* ever procured the author's deſcendents; and to this he, who has now attempted to relate his Life, had the honour of contributing a Prologue *.

* Printed in the firſt volume of this Collection.

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IN the examination of Milton's poetical works, I ſhall pay ſo much regard to time as to begin with his juvenile productions. For his early pieces he ſeems to have had a degree of fondneſs not very laudable; what he has once written he reſolves to preſerve, and gives to the publick an unfiniſhed poem, which he broke off becauſe he was *nothing pleaſed with what he had done*, ſuppoſing his readers less nice than himſelf. Theſe preludes to his future labours are in Italian, Latin, and Engliſh. Of the Italian I cannot pretend to ſpeak as a critick; but I have heard them commended by a man well qualified to decide their merit. The Latin pieces are luſciouſly elegant; but the delight which they afford is rather by the exquiſite imitation of the ancient writers, by the purity of the diction, and the harmony of the numbers, than by any power of invention, or vigour of ſentiment. They are not all of equal value; the elegies excel the odes; and ſome of the exerciſes on Gunpowder Treaſon might have been ſpared.

The Engliſh poems, though they make no promiſes of *Paradiſe Loſt*, have this evidence of genius, that they have a caſt original and unborrowed. But their peculiarity is not excellence; if they differ from the verſes of others, they differ for the worſe; for they are too often diſtinguiſhed by repulſive harſhneſs; the combinations of words are new, but they are not pleaſing; the rhymes and epithets ſeem to be laboriouſly ſought, and violently applied.

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That in the early parts of his life he wrote with much care appears from his manuſcripts, happily preſerved at Cambridge, in which many of his ſmaller works are found as they were firſt written, with the ſubſequent corrections. Such reliques ſhew how excellence is acquired; what we hope ever to do with eaſe, we muſt learn firſt to do with diligence.

Thoſe who admire the beauties of this great poet ſometimes force their own judgement into falſe approbation of his little pieces, and prevail upon themſelves to think that admirable which is only ſingular. All that ſhort compoſitions can commonly attain is neatneſs and elegance. Milton never learned the art of doing little things with grace; he overlooked the milder excellence of ſuavity and ſoftneſs; he was a *Lion* that had no ſkill *in dandling the Kid.*

One of the poems on which much praiſe has been beſtowed is *Lycidas*; of which the diction is harſh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleaſing. What beauty there is we muſt therefore ſeek in the ſentiments and images. It is not to be conſidered as the effuſion of real paſſion; for paſſion runs not after remote alluſions and obſcure opinions. Paſſion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuſe and Mincius, nor tells of rough *ſatyrs* and *fauns with cloven heel.* Where there is leiſure for fiction, there is little grief.

In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a paſtoral; eaſy, vulgar, and therefore diſguſting; whatever images it can ſupply are long ago exhauſted; and its inherent improbability always forces diſſatisfaction on the mind.

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When Cowley tells of Hervey, that they ſtudied together, it is eaſy to ſuppoſe how much he muſt miſs the companion of his labours, and the partner of his diſcoveries; but what image of tenderneſs can be excited by theſe lines?

> We drove a field, and both together heard
> What time the grey fly winds her ſultry horn,
> Battening our flocks with the freſh dews of night.

We know that they never drove a field, and that they had no flocks to batten; and though it be allowed that the repreſentation may be allegorical, the true meaning is ſo uncertain and remote, that it is never ſought, becauſe it cannot be known when it is found.

Among the flocks, and copſes, and flowers, appear the Heathen deities; Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery, ſuch as a college eaſily ſupplies. Nothing can leſs diſplay knowledge, or leſs exerciſe invention, than to tell how a ſhepherd has loſt his companion, and muſt now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his ſkill in piping; and how one god aſks another god what is become of Lycidas, and how neither god can tell. He who thus grieves will excite no ſympathy; he who thus praiſes will confer no honour.

This poem has yet a groſſer fault. With theſe trifling fictions are mingled the moſt awful and ſacred truths, ſuch as ought never to be polluted with ſuch irreverend combinations. The ſhepherd likewiſe is now a feeder of ſheep, and afterwards an eccleſiaſtical paſtor, a ſuperintendant of a Chriſtian flock. Such equivocations are always unſkilful; but here they

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they are indecent, and at leaſt approach to impiety, of which, however, I believe the writer not to have been conſcious.

Such is the power of reputation juſtly acquired, that its blaze drives away the eye from nice examination. Surely no man could have fancied that he read *Lycidas* with pleaſure, had he not known the author.

Of the two pieces, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penſeroſo*, I believe, opinion is uniform; every man that reads them, reads them with pleaſure. The author's deſign is not, what Theobald has remarked, merely to ſhew how objects derive their colours from the mind, by repreſenting the operation of the ſame things upon the gay and the melancholy temper, or upon the ſame man as he is differently diſpoſed; but rather how, among the ſucceſſive variety of appearances, every diſpoſition of mind takes hold on thoſe by which it may be gratified.

The *chearful* man hears the lark in the morning; the *penſive* man hears the nightingale in the evening. The *chearful* man ſees the cock ſtrut, and hears the horn and hounds echo in the wood; then walks, *not unſeen*, to obſerve the glory of the riſing ſun, or liſten to the ſinging milk-maid, and view the labours of the plowman and the mower; then caſts his eyes about him over ſcenes of ſmiling plenty, and looks up to the diſtant tower, the reſidence of ſome fair inhabitant; thus he purſues real gaiety through a day of labour or of play, and delights himſelf at night with the fanciful narratives of ſuperſtitious ignorance.

The *penſive* man, at one time, walks *unſeen* to muſe at midnight; and at another hears the ſullen cur-

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curfew. If the weather drives him home, he ſits in a room lighted only by *glowing embers*; or by a lonely lamp outwatches the North Star, to diſcover the habitation of ſeparate ſouls, and varies the ſhades of meditation, by contemplating the magnificent or pathetick ſcenes of tragick and epick poetry. When the morning comes, a morning gloomy with rain and wind, he walks into the dark trackleſs woods, falls aſleep by ſome murmuring water, and with melancholy enthuſiaſm expects ſome dream of prognoſtication, or ſome muſick played by aërial performers.

Both Mirth and Melancholy are ſolitary, ſilent inhabitants of the breaſt, that neither receive nor tranſmit communication; no mention is therefore made of a philoſophical friend, or a pleaſant companion. The ſerioufneſs does not ariſe from any participation of calamity, nor the gaiety from the pleaſures of the bottle.

The man of *chearfulneſs*, having exhauſted the country, tries what *towered cities* will afford, and mingles with ſcenes of ſplendour, gay aſſemblies, and nuptial feſtivities; but he mingles a mere ſpectator, as, when the learned comedies of Jonſon, or the wild dramas of Shakſpeare, are exhibited, he attends the theatre.

The *penſive* man never loſes himſelf in crowds, but walks the cloiſter, or frequents the cathedral. Milton probably had not yet forſaken the church.

Both his characters delight in muſick; but he ſeems to think that chearful notes would have obtained from Pluto a complete diſmiſſion of Eurydice, of whom ſolemn ſounds only procured a conditional releaſe.

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For the old age of Chearfulness he makes no provision; but Melancholy he conducts with great dignity to the close of life. His Chearfulness is without levity, and his Pensiveness without asperity.

Through these two poems the images are properly selected and nicely distinguished; but the colours of the diction seem not sufficiently discriminated. I know not whether the characters are kept sufficiently apart. No mirth can, indeed, be found in his melancholy; but I am afraid that I always meet some melancholy in his mirth. They are two noble efforts of imagination *.

The greatest of his juvenile performances is the *Mask of Comus*, in which may very plainly be discovered the dawn or twilight of *Paradise Lost*. Milton appears to have formed very early that system of diction, and mode of verse, which his maturer judgement approved, and from which he never endeavoured nor desired to deviate.

Nor does *Comus* afford only a specimen of his language; it exhibits likewise his power of description and his vigour of sentiment, employed in the praise and defence of virtue. A work more truly poetical is rarely found; allusions, images, and de-

* Mr. Warton intimates (and there can be little doubt of the truth of his conjecture) that Milton borrowed many of the images in these two fine poems from "Burton's Anatomy of Melan-"choly," a book published in 1621, and at sundry times since, abounding in learning, curious information, and pleasantry. Mr. Warton says, that Milton appears to have been an attentive reader thereof; and to this assertion I add, of my own knowledge, that it was a book that Dr. Johnson frequently resorted to, as many others have done, for amusement after the fatigue of study. H.

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ſcriptive epithets, embelliſh almoſt every period with laviſh decoration. As a ſeries of lines, therefore, it may be conſidered as worthy of all the admiration with which the votaries have received it.

As a drama it is deficient. The action is not probable. A Maſque, in thoſe parts where ſupernatural intervention is admitted, muſt indeed be given up to all the freaks of imagination, but, ſo far as the action is merely human, it ought to be reaſonable, which can hardly be ſaid of the conduct of the two brothers; who, when their ſiſter ſinks with fatigue in a pathleſs wilderneſs, wander both away together in ſearch of berries too far to find their way back, and leave a helpleſs Lady to all the ſadneſs and danger of ſolitude. This, however is a defect overbalanced by its convenience.

What deſerves more reprehenſion is, that the prologue ſpoken in the wild wood by the attendant Spirit is addreſſed to the audience; a mode of communication ſo contrary to the nature of dramatick repreſentation, that no precedents can ſupport it.

The diſcourſe of the Spirit is too long; an objection that may be made to almoſt all the following ſpeeches; they have not the ſpritelineſs of a dialogue animated by reciprocal contention, but ſeem rather declamations deliberately compoſed, and formally repeated, on a moral queſtion. The auditor therefore liſtens as to a lecture, without paſſion, without anxiety.

The ſong of Comus has airineſs and jollity; but, what may recommend Milton's morals as well as his poetry, the invitations to pleaſure are ſo general, that

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that they excite no diſtinct images of corrupt enjoyment, and take no dangerous hold on the fancy.

The following ſoliloquies of Comus and the Lady are elegant, but tedious. The ſong muſt owe much to the voice if it ever can delight. At laſt the Brothers enter with too much tranquillity; and, when they have feared leſt their ſiſter ſhould be in danger, and hoped that ſhe is not in danger, the Elder makes a ſpeech in praiſe of chaſtity, and the Younger finds how fine it is to be a philoſopher.

Then deſcends the ſpirit in form of a ſhepherd; and the Brother, inſtead of being in haſte to aſk his help, praiſes his ſinging, and enquires his buſineſs in that place. It is remarkable, that at this interview the Brother is taken with a ſhort fit of rhyming: The Spirit relates that the Lady is in the power of Comus; the Brother moralizes again; and the Spirit makes a long narration, of no uſe becauſe it is falſe, and therefore unſuitable to a good Being.

In all theſe parts the language is poetical, and the ſentiments are generous; but there is ſomething wanting to allure attention.

The diſpute between the Lady and Comus is the moſt animated and affecting ſcene of the drama, and wants nothing but a briſker reciprocation of objections and replies to invite attention and detain it.

The ſongs are vigorous and full of imagery; but they are harſh in their diction, and not very muſical in their numbers.

Throughout the whole the figures are too bold, and the language too luxuriant, for dialogue. It is a drama in the epick ſtyle, inelegantly ſplendid, and tediouſly inſtructive.

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The *Sonnets* were written in different parts of Milton's life, upon different occasions. They deserve not any particular criticism; for of the best it can only be said, that they are not bad; and perhaps only the eighth and the twenty-first are truly entitled to this slender commendation. The fabrick of a sonnet, however adapted to the Italian language, has never succeeded in ours, which, having greater variety of termination, requires the rhymes to be often changed.

Those little pieces may be dispatched without much anxiety; a greater work calls for greater care. I am now to examine *Paradise Lost*; a poem, which, considered with respect to design, may claim the first place, and with respect to performance, the second, among the productions of the human mind.

By the general consent of criticks the first praise of genius is due to the writer of an epick poem, as it requires an assemblage of all the powers which are singly sufficient for other compositions. Poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reason. Epick poetry undertakes to teach the most important truths by the most pleasing precepts, and therefore relates some great event in the most affecting manner. History must supply the writer with the rudiments of narration, which he must improve and exalt by a nobler art, must animate by dramatick energy, and diversify by retrospection and anticipation; morality must teach him the exact bounds, and different shades, of vice and virtue; from policy, and the practice of life, he has to learn the discriminations of character, and the tendency of the passions, either single or combined; and physiology must supply him with illustrations and images. To

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put these materials to poetical use, is required an imagination capable of painting nature, and realizing fiction. Nor is he yet a poet till he has attained the whole extension of his language, distinguished all the delicacies of phrase, and all the colours of words, and learned to adjust their different sounds to all the varieties of metrical modulation.

Bossu is of opinion, that the poet's first work is to find a *moral*, which his fable is afterwards to illustrate and establish. This seems to have been the process only of Milton; the moral of other poems is incidental and consequent; in Milton's only it is essential and intrinsick. His purpose was the most useful and the most arduous; *to vindicate the ways of God to man*; to shew the reasonableness of religion, and the necessity of obedience to the Divine Law.

To convey this moral, there must be a *fable*, a narration artfully constructed, so as to excite curiosity, and surprise expectation. In this part of his work, Milton must be confessed to have equalled every other poet. He has involved in his account of the Fall of Man the events which preceded, and those that were to follow it: he has interwoven the whole system of theology with such propriety, that every part appears to be necessary; and scarcely any recital is wished shorter for the sake of quickening the progress of the main action.

The subject of an epick poem is naturally an event of great importance. That of Milton is not the destruction of a city, the conduct of a colony, or the foundation of an empire. His subject is the fate of worlds, the revolutions of Heaven and of Earth; rebellion, against the supreme King, raised by the

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highest order of created beings; the overthrow of their host, and the punishment of their crime; the creation of a new race of reasonable creatures; their original happiness and innocence, their forfeiture of immortality, and their restoration to hope and peace.

Great events can be hastened or retarded only by persons of elevated dignity. Before the greatness displayed in Milton's poem, all other greatness shrinks away. The weakest of his agents are the highest and noblest of human beings, the original parents of mankind; with whose actions the elements consented; on whose rectitude, or deviation of will, depended the state of terrestrial nature, and the condition of all the future inhabitants of the globe.

Of the other agents in the poem, the chief are such as it is irreverence to name on slight occasions. The rest were lower powers;

> ——of which the least could wield
> Those elements, and arm him with the force
> Of all their regions;

powers, which only the controul of Omnipotence restrains from laying creation waste, and filling the vast expanse of space with ruin and confusion. To display the motives and actions of beings thus superior, so far as human reason can examine them, or human imagination represent them, is the task which this mighty poet has undertaken and performed.

In the examination of epick poems much speculation is commonly employed upon the *characters*. The characters in the *Paradise Lost*, which admit of examination, are those of angels and of man; of angels

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angels good and evil; of man in his innocent and ſinful ſtate.

Among the angels, the virtue of Raphael is mild and placid, of eaſy condeſcenſion and free communication; that of Michael is regal and lofty, and, as may ſeem, attentive to the dignity of his own nature. Abdiel and Gabriel appear occaſionally, and act as every incident requires; the ſolitary fidelity of Abdiel is very amiably painted.

Of the evil angels the characters are more diverſified. To Satan, as Addiſon obſerves, ſuch ſentiments are given as ſuit *the moſt exalted and moſt depraved being*. Milton has been cenſured by Clarke *, for the impiety which ſometimes breaks from Satan's mouth; for there are thoughts, as he juſtly remarks, which no obſervation of character can juſtify, becauſe no good man would willingly permit them to paſs, however tranſiently, through his own mind. To make Satan ſpeak as a rebel, without any ſuch expreſſions as might taint the reader's imagination, was indeed one of the great difficulties in Milton's undertaking; and I cannot but think that he has extricated himſelf with great happineſs. There is in Satan's ſpeeches little that can give pain to a pious ear. The language of rebellion cannot be the ſame with that of obedience. The malignity of Satan foams in haughtineſs and obſtinacy; but his expreſſions are commonly general, and no otherwiſe offenſive than as they are wicked.

The other chiefs of the celeſtial rebellion are very judiciouſly diſcriminated in the firſt and ſecond books;

* Author of the "Eſſay on Study." Dr. J.

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and the ferocious character of Moloch appears, both in the battle and the council, with exact consistency.

To Adam and to Eve are given, during their innocence, such sentiments as innocence can generate and utter. Their love is pure benevolence and mutual veneration; their repasts are without luxury, and their diligence without toil. Their addresses to their Maker have little more than the voice of admiration and gratitude. Fruition left them nothing to ask; and Innocence left them nothing to fear.

But with guilt enter distrust and discord, mutual accusation, and stubborn self-defence; they regard each other with alienated minds, and dread their Creator as the avenger of their transgression. At last they seek shelter in his mercy, soften to repentance, and melt in supplication. Both before and after the Fall, the superiority of Adam is diligently sustained.

Of the *probable* and the *marvellous*, two parts of a vulgar epick poem, which immerge the critick in deep consideration, the *Paradise Lost* requires little to be said. It contains the history of a miracle, of Creation and Redemption; it displays the power and the mercy of the Supreme Being; the probable therefore is marvellous, and the marvellous is probable. The substance of the narrative is truth; and, as truth allows no choice, it is, like necessity, superior to rule. To the accidental or adventitious parts, as to every thing human, some slight exceptions may be made; but the main fabrick is immovably supported.

It

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It is juſtly remarked by Addiſon, that this poem has, by the nature of its ſubject, the advantage above all others, that it is univerſally and perpetually interesting. All mankind will, through all ages, bear the ſame relation to Adam and to Eve, and muſt partake of that good and evil which extend to themſelves.

Of the *Machinery*, ſo called from Θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, by which is meant the occaſional interpoſition of ſupernatural power, another fertile topick of critical remarks, here is no room to ſpeak, becauſe every thing is done under the immediate and viſible direction of Heaven; but the rule is ſo far obſerved, that no part of the action could have been accompliſhed by any other means.

Of *epiſodes*, I think there are only two, contained in Raphael's relation of the war in Heaven, and Michael's prophetick account of the changes to happen in this world. Both are cloſely connected with the great action; one was neceſſary to Adam as a warning, the other as a conſolation.

To the completeneſs or *integrity* of the deſign nothing can be objected; it has diſtinctly and clearly what Ariſtotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end. There is perhaps no poem, of the ſame length, from which ſo little can be taken without apparent mutilation. Here are no funeral games, nor is there any long deſcription of a ſhield. The ſhort digreſſions at the beginning of the third, ſeventh, and ninth books, might doubtleſs be ſpared; but ſuperfluities ſo beautiful who would take away? or who does not wiſh that the author of the *Iliad* had gratified ſucceeding ages with a little knowledge of

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himſelf? Perhaps no paſſages are more frequently or more attentively read than thoſe extrinſick paragraphs; and, ſince the end of poetry is pleaſure, that cannot be unpoetical with which all are pleaſed.

The queſtions, whether the action of the poem be ſtrictly *one*, whether the poem can be properly termed *heroick*, and who is the hero, are raiſed by ſuch readers as draw their principles of judgement rather from books than from reaſon. Milton, though he intituled *Paradiſe Loſt* only a *poem*, yet calls it himſelf *heroick ſong*. Dryden petulantly and indecently denies the heroiſm of Adam, becauſe he was overcome; but there is no reaſon why the hero ſhould not be unfortunate, except eſtabliſhed practice, ſince ſucceſs and virtue do not go neceſſarily together. Cato is the hero of Lucan; but Lucan's authority will not be ſuffered by Quintilian to decide. However, if ſucceſs be neceſſary, Adam's deceiver was at laſt cruſhed; Adam was reſtored to his Maker's favour, and therefore may ſecurely reſume his human rank.

After the ſcheme and fabrick of the poem, muſt be conſidered its component parts, the ſentiments and the diction.

The *ſentiments*, as expreſſive of manners, or appropriated to characters, are, for the greater part, unexceptionably juſt.

Splendid paſſages, containing leſſons of morality, or precepts of prudence, occur ſeldom. Such is the original formation of this poem, that, as it admits no human manners till the Fall, it can give little aſſiſtance to human conduct. Its end is to raiſe the thoughts above ſublunary cares or pleaſures. Yet the

praiſe

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praiſe of that fortitude, with which Abdiel maintained his ſingularity of virtue againſt the ſcorn of multitudes, may be accommodated to all times; and Raphael's reproof of Adam's curioſity after the planetary motions, with the anſwer returned by Adam, may be confidently oppoſed to any rule of life which any poet has delivered.

The thoughts which are occaſionally called forth in the progreſs, are ſuch as could only be produced by an imagination in the higheſt degree fervid and active, to which materials were ſupplied by inceſſant ſtudy and unlimited curioſity. The heat of Milton's mind may be ſaid to ſublimate his learning, to throw off into his work the ſpirit of ſcience, unmingled with its groſſer parts.

He had conſidered creation in its whole extent, and his deſcriptions are therefore learned. He had acuſtomed his imagination to unreſtrained indulgence, and his conceptions therefore were extenſive. The characteriſtick quality of his poem is ſublimity. He ſometimes deſcends to the elegant, but his element is the great. He can occaſionally inveſt himſelf with grace; but his natural port is gigantick loftineſs *. He can pleaſe when pleaſure is required; but it is his peculiar power to aſtoniſh.

He ſeems to have been well acquainted with his own genius, and to know what it was that Nature had beſtowed upon him more bountifully than upon others; the power of diſplaying the vaſt, illuminating the ſplendid, enforcing the awful, darkening the gloomy, and aggravating the dreadful; he therefore

* Algarotti terms it *giganteſca ſublimità Miltoniana.* Dr. J.

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chose a subject on which too much could not be said, on which he might tire his fancy without the censure of extravagance.

The appearances of nature, and the occurrences of life, did not satiate his appetite of greatness. To paint things as they are, requires a minute attention, and employs the memory rather than the fancy. Milton's delight was to sport in the wide regions of possibility; reality was a scene too narrow for his mind. He sent his faculties out upon discovery, into worlds where only imagination can travel, and delighted to form new modes of existence, and furnish sentiment and action to superior beings, to trace the counsels of Hell, or accompany the choirs of Heaven.

But he could not be always in other worlds; he must sometimes revisit earth, and tell of things visible and known. When he cannot raise wonder by the sublimity of his mind, he gives delight by its fertility.

Whatever be his subject, he never fails to fill the imagination. But his images and descriptions of the scenes or operations of Nature do not seem to be always copied from original form, nor to have the freshness, racineſs, and energy, of immediate observation. He saw Nature, as Dryden expresses it, *through the spectacles of books*; and on most occasions calls learning to his assistance. The garden of Eden brings to his mind the vale of *Enna*, where Proserpine was gathering flowers. Satan makes his way through fighting elements, like *Argo* between the *Cyancan* rocks; or *Ulysses* between the two *Sicilian* whirlpools, when he shunned *Charybdis* on the *larboard*.

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board. The mythological allusions have been justly censured, as not being always used with notice of their vanity; but they contribute variety to the narration, and produce an alternate exercise of the memory and the fancy.

His similies are less numerous, and more various, than those of his predecessors. But he does not confine himself within the limits of rigorous comparison: his great excellence is amplitude; and he expands the adventitious image beyond the dimensions which the occasion required. Thus comparing the shield of Satan to the orb of the Moon, he crouds the imagination with the discovery of the telescope, and all the wonders which the telescope discovers.

Of his moral sentiments it is hardly praise to affirm that they excel those of all other poets; for this superiority he was indebted to his acquaintance with the sacred writings. The antient epick poets, wanting the light of Revelation, were very unskilful teachers of virtue; their principal characters may be great, but they are not amiable. The reader may rise from their works with a greater degree of active or passive fortitude, and sometimes of prudence; but he will be able to carry away few precepts of justice, and none of mercy.

From the Italian writers it appears, that the advantages of even Christian knowledge may be possessed in vain. Ariosto's pravity is generally known; and, though the *Deliverance of Jerusalem* may be considered as a sacred subject, the poet has been very sparing of moral instruction.

In

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In Milton every line breathes ſanctity of thought, and purity of manners, except when the train of the narration requires the introduction of the rebellious ſpirits; and even they are compelled to acknowledge their ſubjection to God, in ſuch a manner as excites reverence and confirms piety.

Of human beings there are but two; but thoſe two are the parents of mankind, venerable before their fall for dignity and innocence, and amiable after it for repentance and ſubmiſſion. In the firſt ſtate their affection is tender without weakneſs, and their piety ſublime without preſumption. When they have ſinned, they ſhew how diſcord begins in mutual frailty, and how it ought to ceaſe in mutual forbearance; how confidence of the divine favour is forfeited by ſin, and how hope of pardon may be obtained by penitence and prayer. A ſtate of innocence we can only conceive, if indeed, in our preſent miſery, it be poſſible to conceive it; but the ſentiments and worſhip proper to a fallen and offending Being, we have all to learn, as we have all to practiſe.

The poet, whatever be done, is always great. Our progenitors in their firſt ſtate converſed with angels; even when folly and ſin had degraded them, they had not in their humiliation *the port of mean ſuitors*; and they riſe again to reverential regard, when we find that their prayers were heard.

As human paſſions did not enter the world before the Fall, there is in the *Paradiſe Loſt* little opportunity for the pathetick; but what little there is has not been loſt. That paſſion which is peculiar to rational nature,

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nature, the anguish arising from the consciousness of transgression, and the horrors attending the sense of the Divine Displeasure, are very justly described and forcibly impressed. But the passions are moved only on one occasion; sublimity is the general and prevailing quality of this poem; sublimity variously modified, sometimes descriptive, sometimes argumentative.

The defects and faults of *Paradise Lost*, for faults and defects every work of man must have, it is the business of impartial criticism to discover. As, in displaying the excellence of Milton, I have not made long quotations, because of selecting beauties there had been no end, I shall in the same general manner mention that which seems to deserve censure; for what Englishman can take delight in transcribing passages, which, if they lessen the reputation of Milton, diminish in some degree the honour of our country?

The generality of my scheme does not admit the frequent notice of verbal inaccuracies; which Bentley, perhaps better skilled in grammar than in poetry, has often found, though he sometimes made them, and which he imputed to the obtrusions of a reviser, whom the author's blindness obliged him to employ; a supposition rash and groundless, if he thought it true; and vile and pernicious, if, as is said, he in private allowed it to be false.

The plan of *Paradise Lost* has this inconvenience, that it comprises neither human actions nor human manners. The man and woman who act and suffer are in a state which no other man or woman can ever know. The reader finds no transaction in which he can

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can be engaged; beholds no condition in which he can by any effort of imagination place himself; he has, therefore, little natural curiosity or sympathy.

We all, indeed, feel the effects of Adam's disobedience; we all sin like Adam, and like him must all bewail our offences; we have restless and insidious enemies in the fallen angels; and in the blessed spirits we have guardians and friends; in the Redemption of mankind we hope to be included; and in the description of Heaven and Hell we are surely interested, as we are all to reside hereafter either in the regions of horrour or of bliss.

But these truths are too important to be new; they have been taught to our infancy; they have mingled with our solitary thoughts and familiar conversations, and are habitually interwoven with the whole texture of life. Being therefore not new, they raise no unaccustomed emotion in the mind; what we knew before, we cannot learn; what is not unexpected, cannot surprise.

Of the ideas suggested by these awful scenes, from some we recede with reverence, except when stated hours require their association; and from others we shrink with horrour, or admit them only as salutary inflictions, as counterpoises to our interests and passions. Such images rather obstruct the career of fancy than incite it.

Pleasure and terrour are indeed the genuine sources of poetry; but poetical pleasure must be such as human imagination can at least conceive; and poetical terrour such as human strength and fortitude may combat. The good and evil of Eternity are too ponderous for the wings of wit; the mind sinks under

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under them in paſſive helpleſſneſs, content with calm belief and humble adoration.

Known truths, however, may take a different appearance, and be conveyed to the mind by a new train of intermediate images. This Milton has undertaken, and performed with pregnancy and vigour of mind peculiar to himſelf. Whoever conſiders the few radical poſitions which the Scriptures afforded him, will wonder by what energetic operation he expanded them to ſuch extent, and ramified them to ſo much variety, reſtrained as he was by religious reverence from licentiouſneſs of fiction.

Here is a full diſplay of the united force of ſtudy and genius; of a great accumulation of materials, with judgement to digeſt, and fancy to combine them: Milton was able to ſelect from nature, or from ſtory, from ancient fable, or from modern ſcience, whatever could illuſtrate or adorn his thoughts. An accumulation of knowledge impregnated his mind, fermented by ſtudy, and exalted by imagination.

It has been therefore ſaid, without an indecent hyperbole, by one of his encomiaſts, that in reading *Paradiſe Loſt* we read a book of univerſal knowledge.

But original deficience cannot be ſupplied. The want of human intereſt is always felt. *Paradiſe Loſt* is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wiſhed it longer than it is. Its perûſal is a duty rather than a pleaſure. We read Milton for inſtruction, retire harraſſed, and overburdened, and look elſewhere for recreation; we deſert our maſter, and ſeek for companions.

Another

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Another inconvenience of Milton's design is, that it requires the description of what cannot be described, the agency of spirits. He saw that immateriality supplied no images, and that he could not shew angels acting but by instruments of action; he therefore invested them with form and matter. This, being necessary, was therefore defensible; and he should have secured the consistency of his system, by keeping immateriality out of sight, and enticing his reader to drop it from his thoughts. But he has unhappily perplexed his poetry with his philosophy. His infernal and celestial powers are sometimes pure spirit, and sometimes animated body. When Satan walks with his lance upon the *burning marl*, he has a body; when, in his passage between Hell and the new world, he is in danger of sinking in the vacuity, and is supported by a gust of rising vapours, he has a body; when he animates the toad, he seems to be mere spirit, that can penetrate matter at pleasure; when he *starts up in his own shape*, he has at least a determined form; and, when he is brought before Gabriel, he has *a spear and a shield*, which he had the power of hiding in the toad, though the arms of the contending angels are evidently material.

The vulgar inhabitants of Pandæmonium, being *incorporeal spirits*, are *at large, though without number*, in a limited space: yet in the battle, when they were overwhelmed by mountains, their armour hurt them, *crushed in upon their substance, now grown gross by sinning*. This likewise happened to the uncorrupted angels, who were overthrown the *sooner for their arms, for unarmed they might easily as spirits have evaded by contraction or remove*. Even as spirits they are

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are hardly ſpiritual; for *contraction* and *remove* are images of matter; but if they could have eſcaped without their armour, they might have eſcaped from it, and left only the empty cover to be battered. Uriel, when he rides on a ſunbeam, is material; Satan is material when he is afraid of the proweſs of Adam.

The confuſion of ſpirit and matter, which pervades the whole narration of the war of Heaven, fills it with incongruity; and the book in which it is related is, I believe, the favourite of children, and gradually neglected as knowledge is increaſed.

After the operation of immaterial agents which cannot be explained, may be conſidered that of allegorical perſons which have no real exiſtence. To exalt cauſes into agents, to inveſt abſtract ideas with form, and animate them with activity, has always been the right of poetry. But ſuch airy beings are, for the moſt part, ſuffered only to do their natural office, and retire. Thus Fame tells a tale, and Victory hovers over a general, or perches on a ſtandard; but Fame and Victory can do no more. To give them any real employment, or aſcribe to them any material agency, is to make them allegorical no longer, but to ſhock the mind by aſcribing effects to non-entity. In the *Prometheus* of Æſchylus, we ſee *Violence* and *Strength*, and in the *Alceſtis* of Euripides, we ſee *Death*, brought upon the ſtage, all as active perſons of the drama; but no precedents can juſtify abſurdity.

Milton's allegory of Sin and Death is undoubtedly faulty. Sin is indeed the mother of Death, and may be allowed to be the portreſs of Hell; but when they

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they ſtop the journey of Satan, a journey deſcribed as real, and when Death offers him battle, the allegory is broken. That Sin and Death ſhould have ſhewn the way to Hell, might have been allowed; but they cannot facilitate the paſſage by building a bridge, becauſe the difficulty of Satan's paſſage is deſcribed as real and ſenſible, and the bridge ought to be only figurative. The Hell aſſigned to the rebellious ſpirits is deſcribed as not leſs local than the reſidence of man. It is placed in ſome diſtant part of ſpace, ſeparated from the regions of harmony and order by a chaotic waſte and an unoccupied vacuity; but *Sin* and *Death* worked up a *mole* of *aggravated ſoil*, cemented with *aſphaltus*; a work too bulky for ideal architects.

This unſkilful allegory appears to me one of the greateſt faults of the poem; and to this there was no temptation but the author's opinion of its beauty.

To the conduct of the narrative ſome objections may be made. Satan is with great expectation brought before Gabriel in Paradiſe, and is ſuffered to go away unmoleſted. The Creation of man is repreſented as the conſequence of the vacuity left in Heaven by the expulſion of the rebels; yet Satan mentions it as a report *riſe in Heaven* before his departure.

To find ſentiments for the ſtate of innocence was very difficult; and ſomething of anticipation perhaps is now and then diſcovered. Adam's diſcourſe of dreams ſeems not to be the ſpeculation of a new-created being. I know not whether his anſwer to the angel's reproof for curioſity does not want ſomething of propriety; it is the ſpeech of a man acquainted

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quainted with many other men. Some philoſophical notions, eſpecially when the philoſophy is falſe, might have been better omitted. The angel, in a compariſon, ſpeaks of *timorous deer*, before deer were yet timorous, and before Adam could underſtand the compariſon.

Dryden remarks, that Milton has ſome flats among his elevations. This is only to ſay, that all the parts are not equal. In every work, one part muſt be for the ſake of others; a palace muſt have paſſages; a poem muſt have tranſitions. It is no more to be required that wit ſhould always be blazing, than that the ſun ſhould always ſtand at noon. In a great work there is a viciſſitude of luminous and opaque parts, as there is in the world a ſucceſſion of day and night. Milton, when he has expatiated in the ſky, may be allowed ſometimes to reviſit earth; for what other author ever ſoared ſo high, or ſuſtained his flight ſo long?

Milton, being well verſed in the Italian poets, appears to have borrowed often from them; and, as every man catches ſomething from his companions, his deſire of imitating Arioſto's levity has diſgraced his work with the *Paradiſe of Fools*; a fiction not in itſelf ill-imagined, but too ludicrous for its place.

His play on words, in which he delights too often; his equivocations, which Bentley endeavours to defend by the example of the ancients; his unneceſſary and ungraceful uſe of terms of art; it is not neceſſary to mention, becauſe they are eaſily remarked, and generally cenſured; and at laſt bear ſo little proportion to the whole, that they ſcarcely deſerve the attention of a critick.

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Such are the faults of that wonderful performance *Paradise Loſt*; which he who can put in balance with its beauties muſt be conſidered not as nice but as dull, as leſs to be cenſured for want of candour, than pitied for want of ſenſibility.

Of *Paradiſe Regained*, the general judgement ſeems now to be right, that it is in many parts elegant, and every where inſtructive. It was not to be ſuppoſed that the writer of *Paradiſe Loſt* could ever write without great effuſions of fancy, and exalted precepts of wiſdom. The baſis of *Paradiſe Regained* is narrow; a dialogue without action can never pleaſe like an union of the narrative and dramatick powers. Had this poem been written not by Milton, but by ſome imitator, it would have claimed and received univerſal praiſe.

If *Paradiſe Regained* has been too much depreciated, *Sampſon Agoniſtes* has in requital been too much admired. It could only be by long prejudice, and the bigotry of learning, that Milton could prefer the ancient tragedies, with their encumbrance of a chorus, to the exhibitions of the French and Engliſh ſtages; and it is only by a blind confidence in the reputation of Milton, that a drama can be praiſed in which the intermediate parts have neither cauſe nor conſequence, neither haſten nor retard the cataſtrophe.

In this tragedy are however many particular beauties, many juſt ſentiments and ſtriking lines; but it wants that power of attracting the attention which a well-connected plan produces.

Milton would not have excelled in dramatick writing; he knew human nature only in the groſs, and had

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had never ſtudied the ſhades of character, nor the combinations of concurring, or the perplexity of contending paſſions. He had read much, and knew what books could teach; but had mingled little in the world, and was deficient in the knowledge which experience muſt confer.

Through all his greater works there prevails an uniform peculiarity of *Diction*, a mode and caſt of expreſſion which bears little reſemblance to that of any former writer; and which is ſo far removed from common uſe, that an unlearned reader, when he firſt opens his book, finds himſelf ſurpriſed by a new language.

This novelty has been, by thoſe who can find nothing wrong in Milton, imputed to his laborious endeavours after words ſuitable to the grandeur of his ideas. *Our language*, ſays Addiſon, *ſunk under him.* But the truth is, that, both in proſe and verſe, he had formed his ſtyle by a perverſe and pedantick principle. He was deſirous to uſe Engliſh words with a foreign idiom. This in all his proſe is diſcovered and condemned; for there judgement operates freely, neither ſoftened by the beauty, nor awed by the dignity of his thoughts; but ſuch is the power of his poetry, that his call is obeyed without reſiſtance, the reader feels himſelf in captivity to a higher and a nobler mind, and criticiſm ſinks in admiration.

Milton's ſtyle was not modified by his ſubject; what is ſhewn with greater extent in *Paradiſe Loſt*, may be found in *Comus*. One ſource of his peculiarity was his familiarity with the Tuſcan poets; the diſpoſition of his words is, I think, frequently Italian;

lian; perhaps ſometimes combined with other tongues. Of him, at laſt, may be ſaid what Jonſon ſays of Spenſer, that *he wrote no language*, but has formed what *Butler* calls a *Babyloniſh Dialect*, in itſelf harſh and barbarous, but made by exalted genius and extenſive learning the vehicle of ſo much inſtruction and ſo much pleaſure, that, like other lovers, we find grace in its deformity.

Whatever be the faults of his diction, he cannot want the praiſe of copiouſneſs and variety: he was maſter of his language in its full extent; and has ſelected the melodious words with ſuch diligence, that from his book alone the Art of Engliſh Poetry might be learned.

After his diction, ſomething muſt be ſaid of his *verſification*. The *meaſure*, he ſays, *is the Engliſh heroick verſe without rhyme*. Of this mode he had many examples among the Italians, and ſome in his own country. The Earl of Surrey is ſaid to have tranſlated one of Virgil's books without rhyme; and, beſide our tragedies, a few ſhort poems had appeared in blank verſe, particularly one tending to reconcile the nation to Raleigh's wild attempt upon Guiana, and probably written by Raleigh himſelf. Theſe petty performances cannot be ſuppoſed to have much influenced Milton, who more probably took his hint from Triſſino's *Italia Liberata;* and, finding blank verſe eaſier than rhyme, was deſirous of perſuading himſelf that it is better.

Rhyme, he ſays, and ſays truly, *is no neceſſary adjunct of true poetry*. But, perhaps, of poetry, as a mental operation, metre or muſick is no neceſſary adjunct: it is however by the muſick of metre that poetry

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has been discriminated in all languages; and, in languages melodiously constructed with a due proportion of long and short syllables, metre is sufficient. But one language cannot communicate its rules to another; where metre is scanty and imperfect, some help is necessary. The musick of the English heroick lines strikes the ear so faintly, that it is easily lost, unless all the syllables of every line co-operate together; this co-operation can be only obtained by the preservation of every verse unmingled with another as a distinct system of sounds; and this distinctness is obtained and preserved by the artifice of rhyme. The variety of pauses, so much boasted by the lovers of blank verse, changes the measures of an English poet to the periods of a declaimer; and there are only a few skilful and happy readers of Milton, who enable their audience to perceive where the lines end or begin. *Blank verse*, said an ingenious critick, *seems to be verse only to the eye.*

Poetry may subsist without rhyme, but English poetry will not often please; nor can rhyme ever be safely spared but where the subject is able to support itself. Blank verse makes some approach to that which is called the *lapidary style;* has neither the easiness of prose, nor the melody of numbers, and therefore tires by long continuance. Of the Italian writers without rhyme, whom Milton alledges as precedents, not one is popular; what reason could urge in its defence has been confuted by the ear.

But, whatever be the advantages of rhyme, I cannot prevail on myself to wish that Milton had been a rhymer; for I cannot wish his work to be other than it is; yet like other heroes, he is to be admired

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rather than imitated. He that thinks himſelf capable of aſtoniſhing may write blank verſe; but thoſe that hope only to pleaſe muſt condeſcend to rhyme.

The higheſt praiſe of genius is original invention. Milton cannot be ſaid to have contrived the ſtructure of an epic poem, and therefore owes reverence to that vigour and amplitude of mind to which all generations muſt be indebted for the art of poetical narration, for the texture of the fable, the variation of incidents, the interpoſition of dialogue, and all the ſtratagems that ſurprize and enchain attention. But, of all the borrowers from Homer, Milton is perhaps the leaſt indebted. He was naturally a thinker for himſelf, confident of his own abilities, and diſdainful of help or hindrance: he did not refuſe admiſſion to the thoughts or images of his predeceſſors, but he did not ſeek them. From his contemporaries he neither courted nor received ſupport; there is in his writings nothing by which the pride of other authors might be gratified, or favour gained; no exchange of praiſe, nor ſolicitation of ſupport. His great works were performed under diſcountenance, and in blindneſs; but difficulties vaniſhed at his touch; he was born for whatever is arduous; and his work is not the greateſt of heroick poems, only becauſe it is not the firſt.

BUT.

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BUTLER.

OF the great author of Hudibras there is a life prefixed to the latter editions of his poem, by an unknown writer, and therefore of disputable authority; and some account is incidentally given by Wood, who confesses the uncertainty of his own narrative; more however than they knew cannot now be learned, and nothing remains but to compare and copy them.

SAMUEL BUTLER was born in the parish of Strensham in Worcestershire, according to his biographer, in 1612. This account Dr. Nash finds confirmed by the register. He was christened Feb. 14.

His father's condition is variously represented. Wood mentions him as competently wealthy; but Mr. Longueville, the son of Butler's principal friend, says he was an honest farmer with some small estate, who made a shift to educate his son at the grammar-school of Worcester, under Mr. Henry Bright *, from whose

* These are the words of the author of the short account of Butler prefixed to Hudibras, which Dr. Johnson, notwithstanding what he says above, seems to have supposed was written by Mr. Longueville,

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whose care he removed for a short time to Cambridge; but, for want of money, was never made a member of any college. Wood leaves us rather doubtful whether he went to Cambridge or Oxford; but at last makes him pass six or seven years at Cambridge, without knowing in what hall or college; yet it can hardly be imagined that he lived so long in either university but as belonging to one house or another; and it is still less likely that he could have so long inhabited a place of learning with so little distinction as to leave his residence uncertain. Dr. Nash has discovered that his father was owner of a house and a little land, worth about eight pounds a year, still called *Butler's tenement*.

Longueville, the father; but the contrary is to be inferred from a subsequent passage, wherein the author laments that he had neither such an acquaintance nor interest with Mr. Longueville as to procure from him the golden remains of Butler there mentioned. He was probably led into this mistake by a note in the Biog. Brit. p 1077, signifying, that the son of this gentleman was living in 1736.

Of this friend and generous patron of Butler, Mr. William Longueville, I find an account, written by a person who was well acquainted with him, to this effect, viz. that he was a conveyancing lawyer, and a bencher of the Inner Temple, and had raised himself from a low beginning to very great eminence in that profession; that he was eloquent and learned, of spotless integrity; that he supported an aged father who had ruined his fortunes by extravagance, and by his industry and application re-edified a ruined family; that he supported Butler, who, but for him, must literally have starved; and received from him as a recompence the papers called his Remains. Life of the Lord-keeper Guilford, p. 289. These have since been given to the publick by Mr. Thyer of Manchester; and the originals are now in the hands of the Rev. Dr. Farmer, master of Emanuel College, Cambridge. H.

Wood

Wood has his information from his brother, whose narrative placed him at Cambridge, in opposition to that of his neighbours, which sent him to Oxford. The brother's seems the best authority, till, by confessing his inability to tell his hall or college, he gives reason to suspect that he was resolved to bestow on him an academical education; but durst not name a college, for fear of detection.

He was for some time, according to the author of his Life, clerk to Mr. Jefferys of Earl's Croomb in Worcestershire, an eminent justice of the peace. In his service he had not only leisure for study, but for recreation: his amusements were musick and painting; and the reward of his pencil was the friendship of the celebrated Cooper. Some pictures, said to be his, were shewn to Dr. Nash, at Earl's Croomb; but, when he enquired for them some years afterwards, he found them destroyed, to stop windows, and owns that they hardly deserved a better fate.

He was afterwards admitted into the family of the Countess of Kent, where he had the use of a library; and so much recommended himself to Selden, that he was often employed by him in literary business. Selden, as is well known, was steward to the Countess, and is supposed to have gained much of his wealth by managing her estate.

In what character Butler was admitted into that Lady's service, how long he continued in it, and why he left it, is, like the other incidents of his life, utterly unknown.

The vicissitudes of his condition placed him afterwards in the family of Sir Samuel Luke, one of Cromwell's officers. Here he observed so much of the

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the character of the sectaries, that he is said to have written or begun his poem at this time; and it is likely that such a design would be formed in a place where he saw the principles and practices of the rebels, audacious and undisguised in the confidence of success.

At length the King returned, and the time came in which loyalty hoped for its reward. Butler, however, was only made secretary to the Earl of Carbury, president of the principality of Wales; who conferred on him the stewardship of Ludlow Castle, when the Court of the Marches was revived.

In this part of his life, he married Mrs. Herbert, a gentlewoman of a good family; and lived, says Wood, upon her fortune, having studied the common law, but never practised it. A fortune she had, says his biographer, but it was lost by bad securities.

In 1663 was published the first part, containing three cantos, of the poem of Hudibras, which, as Prior relates, was made known at Court by the taste and influence of the Earl of Dorset. When it was known, it was necessarily admired: the King quoted, the courtiers studied, and the whole party of the royalists applauded it. Every eye watched for the golden shower which was to fall upon the author, who certainly was not without his part in the general expectation.

In 1664 the second part appeared; the curiosity of the nation was rekindled, and the writer was again praised and elated. But praise was his whole reward. Clarendon, says Wood, gave him reason to hope for "places and employments of value and "credit;" but no such advantages did he ever obtain.

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It is reported that the King once gave him three hundred guineas; but of this temporary bounty I find no proof.

Wood relates that he was ſecretary to Villiers Duke of Buckingham, when he was Chancellor of Cambridge: this is doubted by the other writer, who yet allows the Duke to have been his frequent benefactor. That both theſe accounts are falſe there is reaſon to ſuſpect, from a ſtory told by Packe, in his account of the Life of Wycherley; and from ſome verſes which Mr. Thyer has publiſhed in the author's Remains.

"Mr. Wycherley," ſays Packe, "had always laid "hold of an opportunity which offered of repre- "ſenting to the Duke of Buckingham how well Mr. "Butler had deſerved of the Royal Family, by writ- "ing his inimitable Hudibras; and that it was a "reproach to the Court, that a perſon of his loyalty "and wit ſhould ſuffer in obſcurity, and under the "wants he did. The Duke always ſeemed to hearken "to him with attention enough; and after ſome "time undertook to recommend his pretenſions to "his Majeſty. Mr. Wycherley, in hopes to keep "him ſteady to his word, obtained of his grace to "name a day, when he might introduce that modeſt "and unfortunate poet to his new patron. At laſt an "appointment was made, and the place of meeting "was agreed to be the Roebuck. Mr. Butler and "his friend attended accordingly; the Duke joined "them; but, as the D—l would have it, the door "of the room where they ſat was open, and his Grace, "who had ſeated himſelf near it, obſerving a pimp

"of

"of his acquaintance (the creature too was a knight) "trip by with a brace of ladies, immediately quitted "his engagement to follow another kind of buſineſs, "at which he was more ready than in doing good "offices to men of deſert, though no one was better "qualified than he, both in regard to his fortune and "underſtanding, to protect them, and, from that "time to the day of his death, poor Butler never "found the leaſt effect of his promiſe!"

Such is the ſtory. The verſes are written with a degree of acrimony, ſuch as neglect and diſappointment might naturally excite; and ſuch as it would be hard to imagine Butler capable of expreſſing againſt a man who had any claim to his gratitude.

Notwithſtanding this diſcouragement and neglect, he ſtill proſecuted his deſign; and in 1678 publiſhed the third part, which ſtill leaves the poem imperfect and abrupt. How much more he originally intended, or with what events the action was to be concluded, it is vain to conjecture. Nor can it be thought ſtrange that he ſhould ſtop here, however unexpectedly. To write without reward is ſufficiently unpleaſing. He had now arrived at an age when he might think it proper to be in jeſt no longer, and perhaps his health might now begin to fail.

He died in 1680; and Mr. Longueville, having unſucceſsfully ſolicited a ſubſcription for his interment in Weſtminſter Abbey, buried him at his own coſt in the church-yard of Covent Garden *. Dr. Simon Patrick read the ſervice.

Granger

* In a note in the "Biographia Britannica," p. 1075, he is ſaid, on the authority of the younger Mr. Longueville, to have lived for ſome

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Granger was informed by Dr. Pearce, who named for his authority Mr. Lowndes of the Treasury, that Butler had an yearly pension of an hundred pounds. This is contradicted by all tradition, by the complaints of Oldham, and by the reproaches of Dryden; and I am afraid will never be confirmed.

About sixty years afterwards, Mr. Barber, a printer, Mayor of London, and a friend to Butler's principles, bestowed on him a monument in Westminster Abbey, thus inscribed:

M. S.
SAMUELIS BUTLERI,
Qui *Strenshamiæ* in agro *Vigorn.* nat. 1612,
obiit *Lond.* 1680.
Vir doctus imprimis, acer, integer;
Operibus Ingenii, non item præmiis, fœlix:
Satyrici apud nos Carminis Artifex egregius;
Quo simulatæ Religionis Larvam detraxit,
Et Perduellium scelera liberrime exagitavit;
Scriptorum in suo genere, Primus & Postremus.
Ne, cui vivo deerant ferè omnia,
Deesset etiam mortuo Tumulus,
Hoc tandem posito marmore, curavit
JOHANNES BARBER, Civis *Londinensis*, 1721.

After his death were published three small volumes of his posthumous works: I know not by whom collected, or by what authority ascertained *; and, lately, two volumes more have been printed by Mr.

some years in Rose-street, Covent-Garden, and also that he died there; the latter of these particulars is rendered highly probable, by his being interred in the cemetery of that parish. H.

* They were collected into one, and published in 12mo. 1732. H.

Thyer

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Thyer of Manchester, indubitably genuine. From none of these pieces can his life be traced, or his character discovered. Some verses, in the last collection, shew him to have been among those who ridiculed the institution of the Royal Society, of which the enemies were for some time very numerous and very acrimonious, for what reason it is hard to conceive, since the philosophers professed not to advance doctrines, but to produce facts; and the most zealous enemy of innovation must admit the gradual progress of experience, however he may oppose hypothetical temerity.

In this mist of obscurity passed the life of Butler, a man whose name can only perish with his language. The mode and place of his education are unknown; the events of his life are variously related; and all that can be told with certainty is, that he was poor.

THE poem of Hudibras is one of those compositions of which a nation may justly boast; as the images which it exhibits are domestick, the sentiments unborrowed and unexpected, and the strain of diction original and peculiar. We must not, however, suffer the pride, which we assume as the countrymen of Butler, to make any encroachment upon justice, nor appropriate those honours which others have a right to share. The poem of Hudibras is not wholly English; the original idea is to be found in the history of Don Quixote; a book to which a mind of the greatest powers may be indebted without disgrace.

Cervantes shews a man, who having, by the incessant perusal of incredible tales, subjected his understanding

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ſtanding to his imagination, and familiariſed his mind by pertinacious meditation to trains of incredible events, and ſcenes of impoſſible exiſtence; goes out in the pride of knighthood to redreſs wrongs, and defend virgins, to reſcue captive princeſſes, and tumble uſurpers from their thrones; attended by a ſquire, whoſe cunning, too low for the ſuſpicion of a generous mind, enables him often to cheat his maſter.

The hero of Butler is a Preſbyterian Juſtice, who, in the confidence of legal authority and the rage of zealous ignorance, ranges the country to repreſs ſuperſtition and correct abuſes, accompanied by an Independent Clerk, diſputatious and obſtinate, with whom he often debates, but never conquers him.

Cervantes had ſo much kindneſs for Don Quixote, that, however he embarraſſes him with abſurd diſtreſſes, he gives him ſo much ſenſe and virtue as may preſerve our eſteem; wherever he is, or whatever he does, he is made by matchleſs dexterity commonly ridiculous, but never contemptible.

But for poor Hudibras, his poet had no tenderneſs; he chuſes not that any pity ſhould be ſhewn or reſpect paid him: he gives him up at once to laughter and contempt, without any quality that can dignify or protect him.

In forming the character of Hudibras, and deſcribing his perſon and habiliments, the author ſeems to labour with a tumultuous confuſion of diſſimilar ideas. He had read the hiſtory of the mock knights-errant; he knew the notions and manners of a Preſbyterian magiſtrate, and tried to unite the abſurdities of both, however

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however diſtant, in one perſonage. Thus he gives him that pedantic oſtentation of knowledge which has no relation to chivalry, and loads him with martial encumbrances that can add nothing to his civil dignity. He ſends him out a *colonelling*, and yet never brings him within ſight of war.

If Hudibras be conſidered as the repreſentative of the Preſbyterians, it is not eaſy to ſay why his weapons ſhould be repreſented as ridiculous or uſeleſs; for, whatever judgement might be paſſed upon their knowledge or their arguments, experience had ſufficiently ſhewn that their ſwords were not to be deſpiſed.

The hero, thus compounded of ſwaggerer and pedant, of knight and juſtice, is led forth to action, with his ſquire Ralpho, an Independent Enthuſiaſt.

Of the contexture of events planned by the author, which is called the action of the poem, ſince it is left imperfect, no judgement can be made. It is probable, that the hero was to be led through many luckleſs adventures, which would give occaſion, like his attack upon the *bear and fiddle*, to expoſe the ridiculous rigour of the ſectaries; like his encounter with Sidrophel and Whacum, to make ſuperſtition and credulity contemptible; or, like his recourſe to the low retailer of the law, diſcover the fraudulent practices of different profeſſions.

What ſeries of events he would have formed, or in what manner he would have rewarded or puniſhed his hero, it is now vain to conjecture. His work muſt have had, as it ſeems, the defect which Dryden imputes to Spenſer; the action could not have been one; there could only have been a ſucceſ-

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tion of incidents, each of which might have happened without the reſt, and which could not all cooperate to any ſingle concluſion.

The diſcontinuity of the action might however have been eaſily forgiven, if there had been action enough: but I believe every reader regrets the paucity of events, and complains that in the poem of Hudibras, as in the hiſtory of Thucydides, there is more ſaid than done. The ſcenes are too ſeldom changed, and the attention is tired with long converſation.

It is indeed much more eaſy to form dialogues than to contrive adventures. Every poſition makes way for an argument, and every objection dictates an anſwer. When two diſputants are engaged upon a complicated and extenſive queſtion, the difficulty is not to continue, but to end the controverſy. But whether it be that we comprehend but few of the poſſibilities of life, or that life itſelf affords little variety, every man who has tried knows how much labour it will coſt to form ſuch a combination of circumſtances as ſhall have at once the grace of novelty and credibility, and delight fancy without violence to reaſon.

Perhaps the Dialogue of this poem is not perfect. Some power of engaging the attention might have been added to it by quicker reciprocation, by ſeaſonable interruptions, by ſudden queſtions, and by a nearer approach to dramatic ſpritelineſs; without which, fictitious ſpeeches will always tire, however ſparkling with ſentences, and however variegated with alluſions.

The great ſource of pleaſure is variety. Uniformity muſt tire at laſt, though it be uniformity of excellence. We love to expect; and, when expectation is diſappointed or gratified, we want to be again expecting. For this impatience of the preſent, whoever would pleaſe muſt make proviſion. The ſkilful writer *irritat*, *mulcet*, makes a due diſtribution of the ſtill and animated parts. It is for want of this artful intertexture, and thoſe neceſſary changes, that the whole of a book may be tedious, though all the parts are praiſed.

If inexhauſtible wit could give perpetual pleaſure, no eye would ever leave half-read the work of Butler; for what poet has ever brought ſo many remote images ſo happily together? It is ſcarcely poſſible to peruſe a page without finding ſome aſſociation of images that was never found before. By the firſt paragraph the reader is amuſed, by the next he is delighted, and by a few more ſtrained to aſtoniſhment; but aſtoniſhment is a toilſome pleaſure; he is ſoon weary of wondering, and longs to be diverted.

Omnia vult belle Matho dicere, dic aliquando
Et bene, dic neutrum, dic aliquando male.

Imagination is uſeleſs without knowledge: nature gives in vain the power of combination, unleſs ſtudy and obſervation ſupply materials to be combined. Butler's treaſures of knowledge appear proportioned to his expence: whatever topick employs his mind, he ſhews himſelf qualified to expand and illuſtrate it with all the acceſſaries that books can furniſh: he is found not only to have travelled the beaten road, but the bye-paths of literature; not only to have taken

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taken general ſurveys, but to have examined particulars with minute inſpection.

If the French boaſt the learning of Rabelais, we need not be afraid of confronting them with Butler.

But the moſt valuable parts of his performance are thoſe which retired ſtudy and native wit cannot ſupply. He that merely makes a book from books may be uſeful, but can ſcarcely be great. Butler had not ſuffered life to glide beſide him unſeen or unobſerved. He had watched with great diligence the operations of human nature, and traced the effects of opinion, humour, intereſt, and paſſion. From ſuch remarks proceeded that great number of ſententious diſtichs which have paſſed into converſation, and are added as proverbial axioms to the general ſtock of practical knowledge.

When any work has been viewed and admired, the firſt queſtion of intelligent curioſity is, how was it performed? Hudibras was not a haſty effuſion; it was not produced by a ſudden tumult of imagination, or a ſhort paroxyſm of violent labour. To accumulate ſuch a maſs of ſentiments at the call of accidental deſire, or of ſudden neceſſity, is beyond the reach and power of the moſt active and comprehenſive mind. I am informed by Mr. Thyer, of Mancheſter, that excellent editor of this author's reliques, that he could ſhew ſomething like Hudibras in proſe. He has in his poſſeſſion the common-place book, in which Butler repoſited not ſuch events and precepts as are gathered by reading, but ſuch remarks, ſimilitudes, alluſions, aſſemblages, or inferences, as occaſion prompted, or meditation produced, thoſe

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thoughts that were generated in his own mind, and might be uſefully applied to ſome future purpoſe. Such is the labour of thoſe who write for immortality.

But human works are not eaſily found without a periſhable part. Of the antient poets every reader feels the mythology tedious and oppreſſive. Of Hudibras, the manners, being founded on opinions, are temporary and local, and therefore become every day leſs intelligible, and leſs ſtriking. What Cicero ſays of philoſophy is true likewiſe of wit and humour, that "time effaces the fictions of opinions, and confirms the determinations of Nature." Such manners as depend upon ſtanding relations and general paſſions are co-extended with the race of man; but thoſe modifications of life and peculiarities of practice, which are the progeny of error and perverſeneſs, or at beſt of ſome accidental influence or tranſient perſuaſion, muſt periſh with their parents.

Much therefore of that humour which tranſported the laſt century with merriment is loſt to us, who do not know the ſour ſolemnity, the ſullen ſuperſtition, the gloomy moroſeneſs, and the ſtubborn ſcruples, of the antient Puritans; or, if we knew them, derive our information only from books, or from tradition, have never had them before our eyes, and cannot but by recollection and ſtudy underſtand the lines in which they are ſatiriſed. Our grandfathers knew the picture from the life; we judge of the life by contemplating the picture.

It is ſcarcely poſſible, in the regularity and compoſure of the preſent time, to image the tumult of abſurdity, and clamour of contradiction, which perplexed

plexed doctrine, disordered practice, and disturbed both public and private quiet, in that age when subordination was broken, and awe was hissed away; when any unsettled innovator, who could hatch a half-formed notion, produced it to the publick; when every man might become a preacher, and almost every preacher could collect a congregation.

The wisdom of the nation is very reasonably supposed to reside in the parliament. What can be concluded of the lower classes of the people, when in one of the parliaments summoned by Cromwell it was seriously proposed, that all the records in the Tower should be burnt, that all memory of things past should be effaced, and that the whole system of life should commence anew?

We have never been witnesses of animosities excited by the use of mince-pies and plumb-porridge; nor seen with what abhorrence those, who could eat them at all other times of the year, would shrink from them in December. An old Puritan who was alive in my childhood, being at one of the feasts of the church invited by a neighbour to partake his cheer, told him, that if he would treat him at an alehouse with beer brewed for all times and seasons, he should accept his kindness, but would have none of his superstitious meats or drinks.

One of the puritanical tenets was the illegality of all games of chance; and he that reads Gataker upon *Lots* may see how much learning and reason one of the first scholars of his age thought necessary, to prove that it was no crime to throw a die, or play at cards, or to hide a shilling for the reckoning.

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Aſtrology, however, againſt which ſo much of the ſatire is directed, was not more the folly of the Puritans than of others. It had in that time a very extenſive dominion. Its predictions raiſed hopes and fears in minds which ought to have rejected it with contempt. In hazardous undertakings care was taken to begin under the influence of a propitious planet; and, when the king was priſoner in Cariſbrook Caſtle, an aſtrologer was conſulted what hour would be found moſt favourable to an eſcape.

What effect this poem had upon the publick, whether it ſhamed impoſture, or reclaimed credulity, is not eaſily determined. Cheats can ſeldom ſtand long againſt laughter. It is certain that the credit of planetary intelligence wore faſt away; though ſome men of knowledge, and Dryden among them, continued to believe that conjunctions and oppoſitions had a great part in the diſtribution of good or evil, and in the government of ſublunary things.

Poetical Action ought to be probable upon certain ſuppoſitions, and ſuch probability as burleſque requires is here violated only by one incident. Nothing can ſhew more plainly the neceſſity of doing ſomething, and the difficulty of finding ſomething to do, than that Butler was reduced to transfer to his hero the flagellation of Sancho, not the moſt agreeable fiction of Cervantes; very ſuitable indeed to the manners of that age and nation, which aſcribed wonderful efficacy to voluntary penances; but ſo remote from the practice and opinions of the Hudibraſtick time, that judgement and imagination are alike offended.

The

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The diction of this poem is grofsly familiar, and the numbers purpofely neglected, except in a few places where the thoughts by their native excellence fecure themfelves from violation, being fuch as mean language cannot exprefs. The mode of verfification has been blamed by Dryden, who regrets that the heroick meafure was not rather chofen. To the critical fentence of Dryden the higheft reverence would be due, were not his decifions often precipitate, and his opinions immature. When he wifhed to change the meafure he probably would have been willing to change more. If he intended that, when the numbers were heroick, the diction fhould ftill remain vulgar, he planned a very heterogeneous and unnatural compofition. If he preferred a general ftatelinefs both of found and words, he can be only underftood to wifh Butler had undertaken a different work.

The meafure is quick, fpritely, and colloquial, fuitable to the vulgarity of the words and the levity of the fentiments. But fuch numbers and fuch diction can gain regard only when they are ufed by a writer whofe vigour of fancy and copiioufnefs of knowledge entitle him to contempt of ornaments, and who, in confidence of the novelty and juftnefs of his conceptions, can afford to throw metaphors and epithets away. To another that conveys common thoughts in carelefs verfification, it will only be faid, "Pauper videri Cinna vult, & eft pauper." The meaning and diction will be worthy of each other, and criticifm may juftly doom them to perifh together.

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Nor even though another Butler ſhould ariſe, would another Hudibras obtain the ſame regard. Burleſque conſiſts in a diſproportion between the ſtyle and the ſentiments, or between the adventitious ſentiments and the fundamental ſubject. It therefore, like all bodies compounded of heterogeneous parts, contains in it a principal of corruption. All diſproportion is unnatural; and from what is unnatural we can derive only the pleaſure which novelty produces. We admire it awhile as a ſtrange thing; but when it is no longer ſtrange, we perceive its deformity. It is a kind of artifice, which by frequent repetition detects itſelf; and the reader, learning in time what he is to expect, lays down his book, as the ſpectator turns away from a ſecond exhibition of thoſe tricks, of which the only uſe is to ſhew, that they can be played.

ROCHES-

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ROCHESTER.

JOHN WILMOT, afterwards Earl of Rocheſter, the ſon of Henry Earl of Rocheſter, better known by the title of Lord Wilmot, ſo often mentioned in Clarendon's Hiſtory, was born April 10, 1647, at Ditchley in Oxfordſhire. After a grammatical education at the ſchool of Burford, he entered a nobleman into Wadham College in 1659, only twelve years old; and in 1661, at fourteen, was, with ſome other perſons of high rank, made maſter of arts by Lord Clarendon in perſon.

He travelled afterwards into France and Italy; and at his return devoted himſelf to the Court. In 1665 he went to ſea with Sandwich, and diſtinguiſhed himſelf at Bergen by uncommon intrepidity; and the next ſummer ſerved again on-board Sir Edward Spragge, who, in the heat of the engagement, having a meſſage of reproof to ſend to one of his captains, could find no man ready to carry it but Wilmot, who, in an open boat, went and returned amidſt the ſtorm of ſhot.

But his reputation for bravery was not laſting; he was reproached with ſlinking away in ſtreet quarrels, and

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and leaving his companions to ſhift as they could without him; and Sheffield Duke of Buckingham has left a ſtory of his refuſal to fight him.

He had very early an inclination to intemperance, which he totally ſubdued in his travels; but, when he became a courtier, he unhappily addicted himſelf to diſſolute and vicious company, by which his principles were corrupted, and his manners depraved. He loſt all ſenſe of religious reſtraint; and, finding it not convenient to admit the authority of laws which he was reſolved not to obey, ſheltered his wickedneſs behind infidelity.

As he excelled in that noiſy and licentious merriment which wine excites, his companions eagerly encouraged him in exceſs, and he willingly indulged it; till, as he confeſſed to Dr. Burnet, he was for five years together continually drunk, or ſo much inflamed by frequent ebriety, as in no interval to be maſter of himſelf.

In this ſtate he played many frolicks, which it is not for his honour that we ſhould remember, and which are not now diſtinctly known. He often purſued low amours in mean diſguiſes, and always acted with great exactneſs and dexterity the characters which he aſſumed.

He once erected a ſtage on Tower-hill, and harangued the populace as a mountebank; and, having made phyſick part of his ſtudy, is ſaid to have practiſed it ſucceſsfully.

He was ſo much in favour with King Charles, that he was made one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber, and comptroller of Woodſtock Park.

Having

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Having an active and inquisitive mind, he never, except in his paroxysms of intemperance, was wholly negligent of study; he read what is considered as polite learning so much, that he is mentioned by Wood as the greatest scholar of all the nobility. Sometimes he retired into the country, and amused himself with writing libels, in which he did not pretend to confine himself to truth.

His favourite author in French was Boileau, and in English Cowley.

Thus in a course of drunken gaiety, and gross sensuality, with intervals of study perhaps yet more criminal, with an avowed contempt of all decency and order, a total disregard of every moral, and a resolute denial of every religious obligation, he lived worthless and useless, and blazed out his youth and his health in lavish voluptuousness; till, at the age of one-and-thirty, he had exhausted the fund of life, and reduced himself to a state of weakness and decay.

At this time he was led to an acquaintance with Dr. Burnet, to whom he laid open with great freedom the tenour of his opinions, and the course of his life, and from whom he received such conviction of the reasonableness of moral duty, and the truth of Christianity, as produced a total change both of his manners and opinions. The account of those salutary conferences is given by Burnet in a book, intituled, *Some Passages of the Life and Death of* John *Earl of* Rochester, which the critick ought to read for its elegance, the philosopher for its arguments, and the saint for its piety. It were an injury to the reader to offer him an abridgement.

He

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He died July 26, 1680, before he had completed his thirty-fourth year; and was so worn away by a long illness, that life went out without a struggle.

Lord Rochester was eminent for the vigour of his colloquial wit, and remarkable for many wild pranks and sallies of extravagance. The glare of his general character diffused itself upon his writings; the compositions of a man whose name was heard so often were certain of attention, and from many readers certain of applause. This blaze of reputation is not yet quite extinguished; and his poetry still retains some splendour beyond that which genius has bestowed.

Wood and Burnet give us reason to believe, that much was imputed to him which he did not write; I know not by whom the original collection was made, or by what authority its genuineness was ascertained. The first edition was published in the year of his death, with an air of concealment, professing in the title-page to be printed at *Antwerp*.

Of some of the pieces, however, there is no doubt. The Imitation of Horace's Satire, the Verses to Lord Mulgrave, the Satire against Man, the Verses upon *Nothing*, and perhaps some others, are I believe genuine, and perhaps most of those which the collection exhibits.

As he cannot be supposed to have found leisure for any course of continued study, his pieces are commonly short, such as one fit of resolution would produce.

His songs have no particular character; they tell, like other songs, in smooth and easy language, of scorn and kindness, dismission and desertion, absence, and

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and inconſtancy, with the common places of artificial courtſhip. They are commonly ſmooth and eaſy; but have little nature, and little ſentiment.

His imitation of Horace on Lucilius is not inelegant or unhappy. In the reign of Charles the Second began that adaptation, which has ſince been very frequent, of antient poetry to preſent times; and perhaps few will be found where the parallelifm is better preſerved than in this. The verſification is indeed ſometimes careleſs, but it is ſometimes vigorous and weighty.

The ſtrongeſt effort of his Muſe is his poem upon *Nothing*. He is not the firſt who has choſen this barren topick for the boaſt of his fertility. There is a poem called *Nihil* in Latin by *Paſſerat*, a poet and critick of the ſixteenth century in France; who, in his own epitaph, expreſſes his zeal for good poetry thus:

—Molliter oſſa quieſcent
Sint modo carminibus non onerata malis.

His works are not common, and therefore I ſhall ſubjoin his verſes.

In examining this performance, *Nothing* muſt be conſidered as having not only a negative but a kind of poſitive ſignification; as I need not fear thieves, I have *nothing*, and *nothing* is a very powerful protector. In the firſt part of the ſentence it is taken negatively; in the ſecond it is taken poſitively, as an agent. In one of Boileau's lines it was a queſtion, whether he ſhould uſe *à rien faire*, or *à ne rien faire*; and the firſt was preferred becauſe it gave *rien* a ſenſe in ſome ſort poſitive. *Nothing* can be a ſubject only

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only in its positive sense, and such a sense is given it in the first line:

Nothing, thou elder brother ev'n to shade.

In this line, I know not whether he does not allude to a curious book *De Umbra*, by Wowerus, which, having told the qualities of *Shade*, concludes with a poem in which are these lines:

Jam primum terram validis circumspice claustris
Suspensam totam, decus admirabile mundi
Terrasque tractusque maris, camposque liquentes
Aeris et vasti laqueata palatia cœli——
Omnibus UMBRA prior.

The positive sense is generally preserved with great skill through the whole poem; though sometimes, in a subordinate sense, the negative *nothing* is injudiciously mingled. Passerat confounds the two senses.

Another of his most vigorous pieces is his Lampoon on Sir Car Scroop, who, in a poem called *The Praise of Satire*, had some lines like these *:

He who can push into a midnight fray
His brave companion, and then run away,
Leaving him to be murder'd in the street,
Then put it off with some buffoon conceit;
Him, thus dishonour'd, for a wit you own,
And court him as top fidler of the town.

This was meant of Rochester, whose *buffoon conceit* was, I suppose, a saying often mentioned, that *every Man would be a Coward if he durst*; and drew

* I quote from memory. Dr. J.

from

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from him thoſe furious verſes; to which Scroop made in reply an epigram, ending with theſe lines:

Thou can'ſt hurt no man's fame with thy ill word;
Thy pen is full as harmleſs as thy ſword.

Of the ſatire againſt *Man*, Rocheſter can only claim what remains when all Boileau's part is taken away.

In all his works there is ſpritelineſs and vigour, and every where may be found tokens of a mind which ſtudy might have carried to excellence. What more can be expected from a life ſpent in oſtentatious contempt of regularity, and ended before the abilities of many other men began to be diſplayed?

Poema

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Poema Cl. V. Joannis Passeratii,

Regii in Academia Parisiensi Professoris,

Ad ornatissimum virum Erricum Memmium.

Janus adest, festæ poscunt sua dona Kalendæ,
Munus abest festis quod possim offerre Kalendis,
Siccine Castalius nobis exaruit humor?
Usque adeò ingenii nostri est exhausta facultas,
Immunem ut videat redeuntis janitor anni?
Quod nusquam est, potius nova per vestigia quæram.
Ecce autem partes dum sese versat in omnes
Invenit mea Musa NIHIL, ne despice munus.
Nam NIHIL est gemmis, NIHIL est pretiosius auro,
Huc animum, huc igitur vultus adverte benignos;
Res nova narratur quæ nulli audita priorum,
Ausonii & Graii dixerunt cætera vates,
Ausoniæ indictum NIHIL est Græcæque Camœnæ.
E cœlo quacunque Ceres sua prospicit arva,
Aut genitor liquidis orbem complectitur ulnis
Oceanus, NIHIL interitus & originis expers.
Immortale NIHIL, NIHIL omni parte beatum.
Quòd si hinc majestas & vis divina probatur,
Num quid honore deûm, num quid dignabimur aris?
Conspectu lucis NIHIL est jucundius almæ,
Vere NIHIL, NIHIL irriguo formosius horto,
Floridius pratis, Zephyri clementius aura;
In bello sanctum NIHIL est, Martisque tumultu:
Justum in pace NIHIL, NIHIL est in fœdere tutum.
Felix cui NIHIL est, (fuerant hæc vota Tibullo)
Non timet insidias: fures, incendia temnit:
Sollicitas sequitur nullo sub-judice lites.
Ille ipse invictis qui subjicit omnia fatis
Zenonis sapiens, NIHIL admiratur & optat.

Socra-

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Socraticique gregis fuit ista scientia quondam,
Scire NIHIL, studio cui nunc incumbitur uni.
Nec quicquam in ludo mavult didicisse juventus,
Ad magnas quia ducit opes, & culmen honorum.
Nosce NIHIL, nosces fertur quod Pythagoreæ
Grano hærere fabæ, cui vox adjuncta negantis.
Multi Mercurio freti duce viscera terræ
Pura liquefaciunt simul, & patrimonia miscent,
Arcano instantes operi. & carbonibus atris,
Qui tandem exhausti damnis, fractique labore,
Inveniunt atque inventum NIHIL usque requirunt.
Hoc dimetiri non ulla decempeda possit:
Nec numeret Libycæ numerum qui callet arenæ:
Et Phœbo ignotum NIHIL est, NIHIL altius astris.
Túque, tibi licet eximium sit mentis acumen,
Omnem in naturam penetrans, et in abdita rerum,
Pace tua, Memmi, NIHIL ignorare vidêris.
Sole tamen NIHIL est, & puro clarius igne.
Tange NIHIL, dicesque NIHIL sine corpore tangi.
Cerne NIHIL, cerni dices NIHIL absque colore.
Surdum audit loquitúrque NIHIL sine voce, volátque
Absque ope pennarûm, & graditur sine cruribus ullis.
Absque loco motuque NIHIL per inane vagatur.
Humano generi utilius NIHIL arte medendi.
Ne rhombos igitur, neu Thessala murmura tentet
Idalia vacuum trajectus arundine pectus,
Neu legat Idæo Dictæum in vertice gramen.
Vulneribus sævi NIHIL auxiliatur amoris.
Vexerit & quemvis trans mœstas portitor undas,
Ad superos imo NIHIL hunc revocabit ab orco.
Inferni NIHIL inflectit præcordia regis,
Parcarúmque colos, & inexorabile pensum.
Obruta Phlegræis campis Titania pubes
Fulmineo sensit NIHIL esse potentius ictu:
Porrigitur magni NIHIL extra mœnia mundi:

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Diique NIHIL metuunt. Quid longo carmine plura
Commemorem? virtute NIHIL præstantius ipsa,
Splendidius NIHIL est; NIHIL est Jove denique majus.
Sed tempus finem argutis imponere nugis:
Ne tibi si multa laudem mea carmina charta,
De NIHILO NIHILI pariant fastidia versus.

ROS-

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ROSCOMMON.

WENTWORTH DILLON, earl of Roſcommon, was the ſon of James Dillon and Elizabeth Wentworth, ſiſter to the earl of Strafford. He was born in Ireland during the lieutenancy of Strafford, who, being both his uncle and his godfather, gave him his own ſurname. His father, the third earl of Roſcommon, had been converted by Uſher to the Proteſtant religion; and when the Popiſh rebellion broke out, Strafford thinking the family in great danger from the fury of the Iriſh, ſent for his godſon, and placed him at his own ſeat in Yorkſhire, where he was inſtructed in Latin: which he learned ſo as to write it with purity and elegance, though he was never able to retain the rules of grammar.

Such is the account given by Mr. *Fenton*, from whoſe notes on Waller moſt of this account muſt be borrowed, though I know not whether all that he relates is certain. The inſtructor whom he aſſigns to Roſcommon is one Dr. *Hall*, by whom he cannot mean the famous *Hall*, then an old man and a biſhop.

 When

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When the ſtorm broke out upon Strafford, his houſe was a ſhelter no longer; and Dillon, by the advice of Uſher, was ſent to *Caen*, where the Proteſtants had then an univerſity, and continued his ſtudies under *Bochart*.

Young Dillon, who was ſent to ſtudy under Bochart, and who is repreſented as having already made great proficiency in literature, could not be more than nine years old. Strafford went to govern Ireland in 1633, and was put to death eight years afterwards. That he was ſent to Caen, is certain: that he was a great ſcholar, may be doubted.

At Caen he is ſaid to have had ſome preternatural intelligence of his father's death.

"The lord Roſcommon, being a boy of ten "years of age, at Caen in Normandy, one day "was, as it were, madly extravagant in playing, "leaping, getting over the tables, boards, &c. He "was wont to be ſober enough; they ſaid, God "grant this bodes no ill-luck to him! In the heat "of this extravagant fit, he cries out, *My father is* "*dead.* A fortnight after, news came from Ireland "that his father was dead. This account I had "from Mr. Knolles, who was his governor, and then "with him,—ſince ſecretary to the earl of Strafford; "and I have heard his lordſhip's relations confirm "the ſame." *Aubrey's Miſcellany.*

The preſent age is very little inclined to favour any accounts of this kind, nor will the name of Aubrey much recommend it to credit; it ought not, however, to be omitted, becauſe better evidence of a fact cannot eaſily be found than is here offered; and it muſt be by preſerving ſuch relations that we may

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may at laſt judge how much they are to be regarded. If we ſtay to examine this account, we ſhall ſee difficulties on both ſides: here is the relation of a fact given by a man who had no intereſt to deceive, and who could not be deceived himſelf; and here is, on the other hand, a miracle which produces no effect; the order of nature is interrupted to diſcover not a future but only a diſtant event, the knowledge of which is of no uſe to him to whom it is revealed. Between theſe difficulties, what way ſhall be found? Is reaſon or teſtimony to be rejected? I believe, what Oſborne ſays of an appearance of ſanctity may be applied to ſuch impulſes or anticipations as this: *Do not wholly ſlight them, becauſe they may be true; but do not eaſily truſt them, becauſe they may be falſe.*

The ſtate both of England and Ireland was at this time ſuch, that he who was abſent from either country had very little temptation to return; and therefore Roſcommon, when he left Caen, travelled into Italy, and amuſed himſelf with its antiquities, and particularly with medals, in which he acquired uncommon ſkill.

At the Reſtoration, with the other friends of monarchy, he came to England, was made captain of the band of penſioners, and learned ſo much of the diſſoluteneſs of the court, that he addicted himſelf immoderately to gaming, by which he was engaged in frequent quarrels, and which undoubtedly brought upon him its uſual concomitants, extravagance and diſtreſs.

After ſome time, a diſpute about part of his eſtate forced him into Ireland, where he was made by the

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duke of Ormond captain of the guards, and met with an adventure thus related by *Fenton*:

"He was at Dublin as much as ever distempered "with the same fatal affection for play, which en-"gaged him in one adventure that well deserves to "be related. As he returned to his lodgings from a "gaming-table, he was attacked in the dark by three "ruffians, who were employed to assassinate him. "The Earl defended himself with so much resolution, "that he dispatched one of the aggressors: whilst a "gentleman, accidentally passing that way, inter-"posed, and disarmed another: the third secured "himself by flight. This generous assistant was a "disbanded officer, of a good family and fair repu-"tation; who, by what we call the partiality of "fortune, to avoid censuring the iniquities of the "times, wanted even a plain suit of cloaths to make "a decent appearance at the castle. But his lord-"ship, on this occasion, presenting him to the duke "of Ormond, with great importunity prevailed with "his grace, that he might resign his post of captain "of the guards to his friend; which for about "three years the gentleman enjoyed, and, upon his "death, the duke returned the commission to his "generous benefactor."

When he had finished his business, he returned to London; was made Master of the Horse to the Dutchess of York; and married the Lady Frances, daughter of the Earl of Burlington, and widow of Colonel Courteney.

He now busied his mind with literary projects, and formed the plan of a society for refining our language and fixing its standard; *in imitation*, says Fenton, *of*

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those learned and polite societies with which he had been acquainted abroad. In this design his friend Dryden is said to have assisted him.

The same design, it is well known, was revived by Dr. Swift in the ministry of Oxford; but it has never since been publicly mentioned, though at that time great expectations were formed by some of its establishment and its effects. Such a society might, perhaps, without much difficulty, be collected; but that it would produce what is expected from it may be doubted.

The Italian academy seems to have obtained its end. The language was refined, and so fixed that it has changed but little. The French academy thought that they refined their language, and doubtless thought rightly; but the event has not shewn that they fixed it; for the French of the present time is very different from that of the last century.

In this country an academy could be expected to do but little. If an academician's place were profitable, it would be given by interest; if attendance were gratuitous, it would be rarely paid, and no man would endure the least disgust. Unanimity is impossible, and debate would separate the assembly.

But suppose the philological decree made and promulgated, what would be its authority? In absolute governments, there is sometimes a general reverence paid to all that has the sanction of power, and the countenance of greatness. How little this is the state of our country needs not to be told. We live in an age in which it is a kind of publick sport to refuse all respect that cannot be enforced. The edicts of

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an Engliſh academy would probably be read by many, only that they might be ſure to diſobey them.

That our language is in perpetual danger of corruption cannot be denied; but what prevention can be found? The preſent manners of the nation would deride authority; and therefore nothing is left but that every writer ſhould criticiſe himſelf.

All hopes of new literary inſtitutions were quickly ſuppreſſed by the contentious turbulence of King James's reign; and Roſcommon, foreſeeing that ſome violent concuſſion of the State was at hand, purpoſed to retire to Rome, alleging, that *it was beſt to ſit near the chimney when the chamber ſmoked*; a ſentence, of which the application ſeems not very clear.

His departure was delayed by the gout; and he was ſo impatient either of hindrance or of pain, that he ſubmitted himſelf to a French empirick, who is ſaid to have repelled the diſeaſe into his bowels.

At the moment in which he expired, he uttered, with an energy of voice that expreſſed the moſt fervent devotion, two lines of his own verſion of *Dies Iræ:*

My God, my Father, and my Friend,
Do not forſake me in my end.

He died in 1684; and was buried with great pomp in Weſtminſter-Abbey.

His poetical character is given by Mr. Fenton:

"In his writings," ſays Fenton, "we view the "image of a mind which was naturally ſerious and "ſolid; richly furniſhed and adorned with all the "ornaments of learning, unaffectedly diſpoſed in the "moſt

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"most regular and elegant order. His imagination "might have probably been more fruitful and "sprightly, if his judgement had been less severe. "But that severity (delivered in a masculine, clear, "succinct style) contributed to make him so emi-"nent in the didactical manner, that no man, with "justice, can affirm he was ever equalled by any of "our nation, without confessing at the same time "that he is inferior to none. In some other kinds "of writing his genius seems to have wanted fire "to attain the point of perfection; but who can "attain it?"

From this account of the riches of his mind, who would not imagine that they had been displayed in large volumes and numerous performances? Who would not, after the perusal of this character, be surprised to find that all the proofs of this genius, and knowledge, and judgement, are not sufficient to form a single book, or to appear otherwise than in conjunction with the works of some other writer of the same petty size *? But thus it is that characters are written: we know somewhat, and we imagine the rest. The observation, that his imagination would probably have been more fruitful and sprightly,

* They were published, together with those of Duke, in an octavo volume, in 1717. The editor, whoever he was, professes to have taken great care to procure and insert all of his lordship's poems that are truly genuine. The truth of this assertion is flatly denied by the author of an account of Mr. John Pomfret, prefixed to his Remains; who asserts, that the Prospect of Death was written by that person many years after Lord Roscommon's decease; as also, that the paraphrase of the Prayer of Jeremy was written by a gentleman of the name of Southcourt, living in the year 1724. H.

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if his judgement had been leſs ſevere, may be anſwered, by a remarker ſomewhat inclined to cavil, by a contrary ſuppoſition, that his judgement would probably have been leſs ſevere, if his imagination had been more fruitful. It is ridiculous to oppoſe judgement to imagination; for it does not appear that men have neceſſarily leſs of one as they have more of the other.

We muſt allow of Roſcommon, what Fenton has not mentioned ſo diſtinctly as he ought, and what is yet very much to his honour, that he is perhaps the only correct writer in verſe before Addiſon; and that, if there are not ſo many or ſo great beauties in his compoſitions as in thoſe of ſome contemporaries, there are at leaſt fewer faults. Nor is this his higheſt praiſe; for Mr. Pope has celebrated him as the only moral writer of King Charles's reign:

> Unhappy Dryden! in all Charles's days,
> Roſcommon only boaſts unſpotted lays.

His great work is his Eſſay on Tranſlated Verſe; of which Dryden writes thus in the preface to his Miſcellanies:

"It was my Lord Roſcommon's Eſſay on Tranſ-
"lated Verſe," ſays Dryden, "which made me un-
"eaſy, till I tried whether or no I was capable of
"following his rules, and of reducing the ſpecu-
"lation into practice. For many a fair precept in
"poetry is like a ſeeming demonſtration in mathe-
"maticks, very ſpecious in the diagram, but fail-
"ing in the mechanick operation. I think I have
"generally obſerved his inſtructions: I am ſure my
"reaſon is ſufficiently convinced both of their truth
"and

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"and uſefulneſs; which, in other words, is to "confeſs no leſs a vanity than to pretend that I "have, at leaſt in ſome places, made examples to "his rules."

This declaration of Dryden will, I am afraid, be found little more than one of thoſe curſory civilities which one author pays to another; for when the ſum of lord Roſcommon's precepts is collected, it will not be eaſy to diſcover how they can qualify their reader for a better performance of tranſlation than might have been attained by his own reflections.

He that can abſtract his mind from the elegance of the poetry, and confine it to the ſenſe of the precepts, will find no other direction than that the author ſhould be ſuitable to the tranſlator's genius; that he ſhould be ſuch as may deſerve a tranſlation; that he, who intends to tranſlate him, ſhould endeavour to underſtand him; that perſpicuity ſhould be ſtudied, and unuſual and uncouth names ſparingly inſerted; and that the ſtyle of the original ſhould be copied in its elevation and depreſſion. Theſe are the rules that are celebrated as ſo definite and important; and for the delivery of which to mankind ſo much honour has been paid. Roſcommon has indeed deſerved his praiſes, had they been given with diſcernment, and beſtowed not on the rules themſelves, but the art with which they are introduced, and the decorations with which they are adorned.

The Eſſay, though generally excellent, is not without its faults. The ſtory of the Quack, borrowed from Boileau, was not worth the importation; he has confounded the Britiſh and Saxon mythology:

I grant

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I grant that from ſome moſſy idol oak,
In double rhymes, our *Thor* and *Woden* ſpoke.

The oak, as I think Gildon has obſerved, belonged to the Britiſh Druids, and *Thor* and *Woden* were Saxon deities. Of the *double rhymes*, which he ſo liberally ſuppoſes, he certainly had no knowledge.

His interpoſition of a long paragraph of blank verſes is unwarrantably licentious. Latin poets might as well have introduced a ſeries of iambicks among their heroicks.

His next work is the tranſlation of the Art of Poetry; which has received, in my opinion, not leſs praiſe than it deſerves. Blank verſe, left merely to its numbers, has little operation either on the ear or mind: it can hardly ſupport itſelf without bold figures and ſtriking images. A poem frigidly didactick, without rhyme, is ſo near to proſe, that the reader only ſcorns it for pretending to be verſe.

Having diſentangled himſelf from the difficulties of rhyme, he may juſtly be expected to give the ſenſe of Horace with great exactneſs, and to ſuppreſs no ſubtilty of ſentiment for the difficulty of expreſſing it. This demand, however, his tranſlation will not ſatisfy; what he found obſcure, I do not know that he has ever cleared.

Among his ſmaller works, the Eclogue of Virgil and the *Dies Iræ* are well tranſlated; though the beſt line in the *Dies Iræ* is borrowed from Dryden. In return, ſucceeding poets have borrowed from Roſcommon.

In

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In the verſes on the Lap-dog, the pronouns *thou* and *you* are offenſively confounded; and the turn at the end is from Waller.

His verſions of the two odes of Horace are made with great liberty, which is not recompenſed by much elegance or vigour.

His political verſes are ſprightly, and when they were written muſt have been very popular.

Of the ſcene of *Guarini*, and the prologue of *Pompey*, Mrs. Philips, in her letters to Sir Charles Cotterel, has given the hiſtory.

"Lord Roſcommon," ſays ſhe, "is certainly one "of the moſt promiſing young noblemen in Ireland. "He has paraphraſed a Pſalm admirably; and a "ſcene of *Paſtor Fido* very finely, in ſome places "much better than Sir Richard Fanſhaw. This was "undertaken merely in compliment to me, who "happened to ſay that it was the beſt ſcene in "Italian, and the worſt in Engliſh. He was only "two hours about it. It begins thus:

"Dear happy groves, and you the dark retreat
"Of ſilent horrour, Reſt's eternal ſeat."

From theſe lines, which are ſince ſomewhat mended, it appears that he did not think a work of two hours fit to endure the eye of criticiſm without reviſal.

When Mrs. Philips was in Ireland, ſome ladies that had ſeen her tranſlation of Pompey reſolved to bring it on the ſtage at Dublin; and, to promote their deſign, Lord Roſcommon gave them a prologue, and Sir Edward Dering an epilogue; "which," ſays ſhe, "are the beſt performances of thoſe kinds I

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"ever saw." If this is not criticism, it is at least gratitude. The thought of bringing Cæsar and Pompey into Ireland, the only country over which Cæsar never had any power, is lucky.

Of Roscommon's works the judgement of the publick seems to be right. He is elegant, but not great; he never labours after exquisite beauties, and he seldom falls into gross faults. His versification is smooth, but rarely vigorous; and his rhymes are remarkably exact. He improved taste, if he did not enlarge knowledge, and may be numbered among the benefactors to English literature.

OTWAY.

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OTWAY.

OF THOMAS OTWAY, one of the first names in the English drama, little is known; nor is there any part of that little which his biographer can take pleasure in relating.

He was born at Trottin in Sussex, March 3, 1651, the son of Mr. Humphry Otway, rector of *Woolbeding*. From Winchester-school, where he was educated, he was entered, in 1669, a commoner of Christ-church; but left the university without a degree, whether for want of money, or from impatience of academical restraint, or mere eagerness to mingle with the world, is not known.

It seems likely that he was in hope of being busy and conspicuous; for he went to London, and commenced player; but found himself unable to gain any reputation on the stage *.

* In *Roscius Anglicanus*, by Downes the prompter, p. 34, we learn, that it was the character of the King in Mrs. Behn's *Forced Marriage, or The Jealous Bridegroom*, which Mr. Otway attempted to perform, and failed in. This event appears to have happened in the year 1672. R.

This

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This kind of inability he ſhared with Shakſpeare and Jonſon, as he ſhared likewiſe ſome of their excellences. It ſeems reaſonable to expect that a great dramatick poet ſhould without difficulty become a great actor; that he who can feel, could expreſs; that he who can excite paſſion, ſhould exhibit with great readineſs its external modes: but ſince experience has fully proved, that of thoſe powers, whatever be their affinity, one may be poſſeſſed in a great degree by him who has very little of the other; it muſt be allowed that they depend upon different faculties, or on different uſe of the ſame faculty; that the actor muſt have a pliancy of mien, a flexibility of countenance, and a variety of tones, which the poet may be eaſily ſuppoſed to want; or that the attention of the poet and the player have been differently employed; the one has been conſidering thought, and the other action; one has watched the heart, and the other contemplated the face.

Though he could not gain much notice as a player, he felt in himſelf ſuch powers as might qualify for a dramatick author; and, in 1675, his twenty-fifth year, produced *Alcibiades*, a tragedy; whether from the *Alcibiade* of *Palaprat*, I have not means to enquire. Langbaine, the great detector of plagiariſm, is ſilent.

In 1677 he publiſhed *Titus and Berenice*, tranſlated from Rapin, with the *Cheats of Scapin*, from Moliere; and in 1678 *Friendſhip in Faſhion*, a comedy, which, whatever might be its firſt reception, was, upon its revival at Drury lane in 1749, hiſſed off the ſtage for immorality and obſcenity.

Want

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Want of morals, or of decency, did not in those days exclude any man from the company of the wealthy and the gay, if he brought with him any powers of entertainment; and Otway is said to have been at this time a favourite companion of the dissolute wits. But as he who desires no virtue in his companion has no virtue in himself, those whom Otway frequented had no purpose of doing more for him than to pay his reckoning. They desired only to drink and laugh: their fondness was without benevolence, and their familiarity without friendship. Men of wit, says one of Otway's biographers, received at that time no favour from the Great but to share their riots; *from which they were dismissed again to their own narrow circumstances. Thus they languished in poverty without the support of eminence.*

Some exception, however, must be made. The Earl of Plymouth, one of King Charles's natural sons, procured for him a cornet's commission in some troops then sent into Flanders. But Otway did not prosper in his military character: for he soon left his commission behind him, whatever was the reason, and came back to London in extreme indigence; which Rochester mentions with mercileſs insolence in the *Session of the Poets:*

Tom Otway came next, Tom Shadwell's dear zany,
And swears for heroicks he writes best of any;
Don Carlos his pockets so amply had fill'd,
That his mange was quite cured, and his lice were all kill'd.
But Apollo had seen his face on the stage,
And prudently did not think fit to engage
The scum of a play-house, for the prop of an age.

Don Carlos, from which he is repreſented as having received ſo much benefit, was played in 1675. It appears, by the lampoon, to have had great ſucceſs, and is ſaid to have been played thirty nights together. This however it is reaſonable to doubt, as ſo long a continuance of one play upon the ſtage is a very wide deviation from the practice of that time; when the ardour for theatrical entertainments was not yet diffuſed through the whole people, and the audience, conſiſting nearly of the ſame perſons, could be drawn together only by variety.

The *Orphan* was exhibited in 1680. This is one of the few plays that keep poſſeſſion of the ſtage, and has pleaſed for almoſt a century, through all the viciſſitudes of dramatick faſhion. Of this play nothing new can eaſily be ſaid. It is a domeſtick tragedy drawn from middle life. Its whole power is upon the affections; for it is not written with much comprehenſion of thought, or elegance of expreſſion. But if the heart is intereſted, many other beauties may be wanting, yet not be miſſed.

The ſame year produced *The Hiſtory and Fall of Caius Marius*; much of which is borrowed from the *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakſpeare.

In 1683 * was publiſhed the firſt, and next year † the ſecond, parts of *The Soldier's Fortune*, two comedies now forgotten; and in 1685 ‡ his laſt and greateſt dramatick work, *Venice Preſerved*, a tragedy, which ſtill continues to be one of the favourites of the publick, notwithſtanding the want of morality in the original deſign, and the deſpicable ſcenes of

* 1681. † 1684. ‡ 1682.

vile

vile comedy with which he has diversified his tragick action. By comparing this with his *Orphan*, it will appear that his images were by time become stronger, and his language more energetick. The striking passages are in every mouth; and the publick seems to judge rightly of the faults and excellences of this play, that it is the work of a man not attentive to decency, nor zealous for virtue; but of one who conceived forcibly, and drew originally, by consulting nature in his own breast.

Together with those plays he wrote the poems which are in the present collection, and translated from the French the *History of the Triumvirate*.

All this was performed before he was thirty-four years old; for he died April 14, 1685, in a manner which I am unwilling to mention. Having been compelled by his necessities to contract debts, and hunted, as is supposed, by the terriers of the law, he retired to a publick-house on Tower-hill, where he is said to have died of want; or, as it is related by one of his biographers, by swallowing, after a long fast, a piece of bread which charity had supplied. He went out, as is reported, almost naked in the rage of hunger, and, finding a gentleman in a neighbouring coffee-house, asked him for a shilling. The gentleman gave him a guinea; and Otway going away bought a roll, and was choaked with the first mouthful. All this, I hope, is not true; and there is this ground of better hope, that Pope, who lived near enough to be well informed, relates in Spence's Memorials, that he died of a fever caught by violent pursuit of a thief that had robbed one of his friends. But that indigence, and its concomitants,

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ſorrow and deſpondency, preſſed hard upon him, has never been denied, whatever immediate cauſe might bring him to the grave.

Of the poems which the preſent collection admits, the longeſt is the *Poet's Complaint of his Muſe*, part of which I do not underſtand; and in that which is leſs obſcure I find little to commend. The language is often groſs, and the numbers are harſh. Otway had not much cultivated verſification, nor much repleniſhed his mind with general knowledge. His principal power was in moving the paſſions, to which Dryden * in his latter years left an illuſtrious teſtimony. He appears by ſome of his verſes to have been a zealous royaliſt, and had what was in thoſe times the common reward of loyalty; he lived and died neglected.

* In his preface to Freſnoy's *Art of Painting*. Dr. J.

WALLER.

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WALLER.

EDMUND WALLER was born on the third of March, 1605, at Colſhill in Hertfordſhire. His father was Robert Waller, Eſquire, of Agmondeſham in Buckinghamſhire, whoſe family was originally a branch of the Kentiſh Wallers; and his mother was the daughter of John Hampden, of Hampden in the ſame county, and ſiſter to Hampden, the zealot of rebellion.

His father died while he was yet an infant, but left him a yearly income of three thouſand five hundred pounds; which, rating together the value of money and the cuſtoms of life, we may reckon more than equivalent to ten thouſand at the preſent time.

He was educated, by the care of his mother, at Eaton; and removed afterwards to King's College in Cambridge. He was ſent to parliament in his eighteenth, if not in his ſixteenth year, and frequented the court of James the Firſt, where he heard a very remarkable converſation, which the writer of the Life prefixed to his Works, who ſeems

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to have been well informed of facts, though he may ſometimes err in chronology, has delivered as indubitably certain:

"He found Dr. Andrews, Biſhop of Wincheſter, "and Dr. Neale, Biſhop of Durham, ſtanding be-"hind his Majeſty's chair; and there happened ſome-"thing extraordinary," continues this writer, "in "the converſation thoſe prelates had with the King, "on which Mr. Waller did often reflect. His Ma-"jeſty aſked the Biſhops, "My Lords, cannot I "take my ſubjects money when I want it, without "all this formality of parliament?" The Biſhop of "Durham readily anſwered, 'God forbid, Sir, but "you ſhould: you are the breath of our noſtrils.' "Whereupon the King turned and ſaid to the bi-"ſhop of Wincheſter, "Well, my Lord, what "ſay you?" 'Sir,' replied the biſhop, 'I have no "ſkill to judge of parliamentary caſes.' The King an-"ſwered, "No put-offs, my Lord; anſwer me pre-"ſently." Then, Sir,' ſaid he, 'I think it is law-"ful for you to take my brother Neale's money; for "he offers it.' Mr. Waller ſaid, the company was "pleaſed with this anſwer, and the wit of it ſeemed "to affect the King; for, a certain lord coming in "ſoon after, his Majeſty cried out, "Oh, my Lord, "they ſay you lig with my Lady." 'No, Sir,' ſays "his Lordſhip in confuſion; 'but I like her com-"pany, becauſe ſhe has ſo much wit.' "Why then," "ſays the King, "do you not lig with my Lord of "Wincheſter there?"

Waller's political and poetical life began nearly together. In his eighteenth year he wrote the poem that appears firſt in his works, on the Prince's Eſcape "at

"at St. Andero:" a piece which justifies the observation made by one of his editors, that he attained, by a felicity like instinct, a style which perhaps will never be obsolete; and that, "were we to judge "only by the wording, we could not know what was "wrote at twenty, and what at fourscore." His versification was, in his first essay, such as it appears in his last performance. By the perusal of Fairfax's translation of Tasso, to which, as * Dryden relates, he confessed himself indebted for the smoothness of his numbers, and by his own acuteness of observation, he had already formed such a system of metrical harmony as he never afterwards much needed, or much endeavoured, to improve. Denham corrected his numbers by experience, and gained ground gradually upon the ruggedness of his age; but what was acquired by Denham was inherited by Waller.

The next poem, of which the subject seems to fix the time, is supposed by Mr. Fenton to be the Address to the Queen, which he considers as congratulating her arrival, in Waller's twentieth year. He is apparently mistaken; for the mention of the nation's obligations to her frequent pregnancy proves that it was written when she had brought many children. We have therefore no date of any other poetical production before that which the murder of the Duke of Buckingham occasioned; the steadiness with which the King received the news in the chapel deserved indeed to be rescued from oblivion.

Neither of these pieces that seem to carry their own dates could have been the sudden effusion of

* Preface to his Fables. Dr. J.

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fancy. In the verſes on the Prince's eſcape, the prediction of his marriage with the Princeſs of France muſt have been written after the event; in the other, the promiſes of the King's kindneſs to the deſcendants of Buckingham, which could not be properly praiſed till it had appeared by its effects, ſhew that time was taken for reviſion and improvement. It is not known that they were publiſhed till they appeared long afterwards with other poems.

Waller was not one of thoſe idolaters of praiſe who cultivate their minds at the expence of their fortunes. Rich as he was by inheritance, he took care early to grow richer, by marrying Mrs. Banks, a great heireſs in the city, whom the intereſt of the court was employed to obtain for Mr. Crofts. Having brought him a ſon, who died young, and a daughter, who was afterwards married to Mr. Dormer of Oxfordſhire, ſhe died in childbed, and left him a widower of about five-and-twenty, gay and wealthy, to pleaſe himſelf with another marriage.

Being too young to reſiſt beauty, and probably too vain to think himſelf reſiſtible, he fixed his heart, perhaps half fondly and half ambitiouſly, upon the Lady Dorothea Sidney, eldeſt daughter of the Earl of Leiceſter, whom he courted by all the poetry in which Sachariſſa is celebrated; the name is derived from the Latin appellation of *ſugar*, and implies, if it means any thing, a ſpiritleſs mildneſs, and dull good-nature, ſuch as excites rather tenderneſs than eſteem, and ſuch as, though always treated with kindneſs, is never honoured or admired.

Yet he deſcribes Sachariſſa as a ſublime predominating beauty, of lofty charms, and imperious influence,

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influence, on whom he looks with amazement rather than fondness, whose chains he wishes, though in vain, to break, and whose presence is *wine* that *inflames to madness.*

His acquaintance with this high-born dame gave Wit no opportunity of boasting its influence; she was not to be subdued by the powers of verse, but rejected his addresses, it is said, with disdain, and drove him away to solace his disappointment with Amoret or Phillis. She married in 1639 the Earl of Sunderland, who died at Newberry in the King's cause; and, in her old age, meeting somewhere with Waller, asked him, when he would again write such verses upon her; "When you are as young, Madam," said he, "and as handsome as you were then."

In this part of his life it was that he was known to Clarendon, among the rest of the men who were eminent in that age for genius and literature; but known so little to his advantage, that they who read his character will not much condemn Sacharissa, that she did not descend from her rank to his embraces, nor think every excellence comprised in wit.

The Lady was, indeed, inexorable; but his uncommon qualifications, though they had no power upon her, recommended him to the scholars and statesmen; and undoubtedly many beauties of that time, however they might receive his love, were proud of his praises. Who they were, whom he dignifies with poetical names, cannot now be known. Amoret, according to Mr. Fenton, was the Lady Sophia Murray. Perhaps by traditions preserved in families more may be discovered.

From

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From the verſes written at Penſhurſt, it has been collected that he diverted his diſappointment by a voyage; and his biographers, from his poem on the Whales, think it not improbable that he viſited the Bermudas; but it ſeems much more likely that he ſhould amuſe himſelf with forming an imaginary ſcene, than that ſo important an incident, as a viſit to America, ſhould have been left floating in conjectural probability.

From his twenty-eighth to his thirty-fifth year, he wrote his pieces on the Reduction of Sallee; on the Reparation of St. Paul's; to the King on his Navy; the panegyrick on the Queen Mother; the two poems to the Earl of Northumberland; and perhaps others, of which the time cannot be diſcovered.

When he had loſt all hopes of Sachariſſa, he looked round him for an eaſier conqueſt, and gained a lady of the family of Breſſe, or Breaux. The time of his marriage is not exactly known. It has not been diſcovered that this wife was won by his poetry; nor is any thing told of her, but that ſhe brought him many children. He doubtleſs praiſed ſome whom he would have been afraid to marry, and perhaps married one whom he would have been aſhamed to praiſe. Many qualities contribute to domeſtick happineſs, upon which poetry has no colours to beſtow; and many airs and ſallies may delight imagination, which he who flatters them never can approve. There are charms made only for diſtant admiration. No ſpectacle is nobler than a blaze.

Of this wife, his biographers have recorded that ſhe gave him five ſons and eight daughters.

During

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During the long interval of parliament, he is represented as living among those with whom it was most honourable to converse, and enjoying an exuberant fortune with that independance and liberty of speech and conduct which wealth ought always to produce. He was however considered as the kinsman of Hampden, and was therefore supposed by the courtiers not to favour them.

When the parliament was called in 1640, it appeared that Waller's political character had not been mistaken. The King's demand of a supply produced one of those noisy speeches which disaffection and discontent regularly dictate; a speech filled with hyperbolical complaints of imaginary grievances: "They," says he, "who think themselves already "undone, can never apprehend themselves in danger; "and they who have nothing left can never give "freely." Political truth is equally in danger from the praises of courtiers, and the exclamations of patriots.

He then proceeds to rail at the clergy, being sure at that time of a favourable audience. His topick is such as will always serve its purpose; an accusation of acting and preaching only for preferment: and he exhorts the Commons *carefully* to *provide* for their *protection against Pulpit Law.*

It always gratifies curiosity to trace a sentiment. Waller has in his speech quoted Hooker in one passage; and in another has copied him, without quoting. "Religion," says Waller, "ought to be the "first thing in our purpose and desires; but that "which is first in dignity is not always to precede in "order of time; for well-being supposes a being; "and

"and the first impediment which men naturally "endeavour to remove, is the want of those things "without which they cannot subsist. God first as-"signed unto Adam maintenance of life, and gave "him a title to the rest of the creatures before he "appointed a law to observe."

"God first assigned Adam," says Hooker, "main-"tenance of life, and then appointed him a law to "observe.—True it is that the kingdom of God "must be the first thing in our purpose and desires; "but inasmuch as a righteous life presupposeth life, "inasmuch as to live virtuously it is impossible, "except we live; therefore the first impediment "which naturally we endeavour to remove is penury, "and want of things without which we cannot live." B. I. Sect. 9.

The speech is vehement; but the great position, that grievances ought to be redressed before supplies are granted, is agreeable enough to law and reason: nor was Waller, if his biographer may be credited, such an enemy to the King, as not to wish his distresses lightened; for he relates, "that the King "sent particularly to Waller, to second his demand "of some subsidies to pay off the army; and Sir "Henry Vane objecting against first voting a sup-"ply, because the King would not accept unless it "came up to his proportion, Mr. Waller spoke ear-"nestly to Sir Thomas Jermyn, comptroller of the "household, to save his master from the effects of "so bold a falsity; 'for,' he said, 'I am but a coun-"try gentleman, and cannot pretend to know the "King's mind:' but Sir Thomas durst not contra-"dict the secretary; and his son, the Earl of St. "Albans,

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"Albans, afterwards told Mr. Waller, that his fa-
"ther's cowardice ruined the King."

In the Long Parliament, which, unhappily for the nation, met Nov. 3, 1640, Waller repreſented Agmondeſham the third time; and was conſidered by the diſcontented party as a man ſufficiently truſty and acrimonious to be employed in managing the proſecution of Judge Crawley, for his opinion in favour of ſhip-money; and his ſpeech ſhews that he did not diſappoint their expectations. He was probably the more ardent, as his uncle Hampden had been particularly engaged in the diſpute, and, by a ſentence which ſeems generally to be thought unconſtitutional, particularly injured.

He was not however a bigot to his party, nor adopted all their opinions. When the great queſtion, whether Epiſcopacy ought to be aboliſhed, was debated, he ſpoke againſt the innovation ſo coolly, ſo reaſonably, and ſo firmly, that it is not without great injury to his name that his ſpeech, which was as follows, has been hitherto omitted in his works:

* "There is no doubt but the ſenſe of what this
"nation had ſuffered from the preſent Biſhops hath
"produced theſe complaints; and the apprehenſions
"men have of ſuffering the like, in time to come,
"make ſo many deſire the taking away of Epiſco-
"pacy: but I conceive it is poſſible that we may
"not, now, take a right meaſure of the minds of
"the people by their petitions; for, when they ſub-
"ſcribed them, the Biſhops were armed with a dan-
"gerous commiſſion of making new canons, impo-

* This ſpeech has been retrieved, from a paper printed at that time, by the writers of the Parliamentary Hiſtory. Dr. J.

" ſing new oaths, and the like; but now we have
" diſarmed them of that power. Theſe petitioners
" lately did look upon Epiſcopacy as a beaſt armed
" with horns and claws; but now that we have cut
" and pared them (and may, if we ſee cauſe, yet
" reduce it into narrower bounds), it may, perhaps,
" be more agreeable. Howſoever, if they be ſtill in
" paſſion, it becomes us ſoberly to conſider the right
" uſe and antiquity thereof; and not to comply
" further with a general deſire, than may ſtand with
" a general good.

" We have already ſhewed, that Epiſcopacy and
" the evils thereof are mingled like water and oil;
" we have alſo, in part, ſevered them; but I believe
" you will find, that our laws and the preſent go-
" vernment of the Church are mingled like wine and
" water; ſo inſeparable, that the abrogation of, at
" leaſt, a hundred of our laws is deſired in theſe pe-
" titions. I have often heard a noble anſwer of the
" Lords, commended in this houſe, to a propoſition
" of like nature, but of leſs conſequence; they
" gave no other reaſon of their refuſal but this,
" *Nolumus mutare Leges Angliæ*: it was the Biſhops
" who ſo anſwered then; and it would become the
" dignity and wiſdom of this houſe to anſwer the
" people, now, with a *Nolumus mutare*.

" I ſee ſome are moved with a number of hands
" againſt the Biſhops; which, I confeſs, rather in-
" clines me to their defence; for I look upon Epiſ-
" copacy as a counterſcarp, or out-work; which, if
" it be taken by this aſſault of the people, and,
" withal, this myſtery once revealed, *That we muſt*
" *deny them nothing when they aſk it thus in troops*, we
" may,

"may, in the next place, have as hard a task to "defend our property, as we have lately had to re- "cover it from the Prerogative. If, by multiplying "hands and petitions, they prevail for an equality "in things ecclesiastical, the next demand perhaps "may be *Lex Agraria*, the like equality in things "temporal.

"The Roman story tells us, "That when the peo- "ple began to flock about the senate, and were more "curious to direct and know what was done, than "to obey, that Commonwealth soon came to ruin: "their *Legem rogare* grew quickly to be a *Legem* "*ferre:* and after, when their legions had found "that they could make a Dictator, they never suf- "fered the senate to have a voice any more in such "election.

"If these great innovations proceed, I shall expect "a flat and level in learning too, as well as in church- "preferments: *Honos alit Artes.* And though it be "true, that grave and pious men do study for learn- "ing-sake, and embrace virtue for itself; yet it is "true that youth, which is the season when learn- "ing is gotten, is not without ambition; nor will "ever take pains to excel in any thing, when there "is not some hope of excelling others in reward and "dignity.

"There are two reasons chiefly alleged against our "church-government.

"First, Scripture, which, as some men think, "points out another form.

"Second, The abuses of the present superiors.

"For Scripture, I will not dispute it in this place; "but I am confident that, whenever an equal division

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"of lands and goods ſhall be deſired, there will be "as many places in Scripture found out, which "ſeem to favour that, as there are now alleged "againſt the prelacy or preferment of the Church. "And, as for abuſes, where you are now in the Re-"monſtrance told what this and that poor man hath "ſuffered by the Biſhops, you may be preſented "with a thouſand inſtances of poor men that have "received hard meaſure from their landlords; and "of worldly goods abuſed, to the injury of others, "and diſadvantage of the owners.

"And therefore, Mr. Speaker, my humble mo-"tion is, That we may ſettle men's minds herein; "and, by a queſtion, declare our reſolution, *to reform*, "that is, *not to aboliſh*, *Epiſcopacy*."

It cannot but be wiſhed that he, who could ſpeak in this manner, had been able to act with ſpirit and uniformity.

When the Commons began to ſet the royal authority at open defiance, Waller is ſaid to have withdrawn from the houſe, and to have returned with the King's permiſſion; and, when the King ſet up his ſtandard, he ſent him a thouſand broad-pieces. He continued, however, to ſit in the rebellious conventicle; but "ſpoke," ſays Clarendon, "with great ſharpneſs "and freedom, which, now there was no danger of "being outvoted, was not reſtrained; and therefore "uſed as an argument againſt thoſe who were gone "upon pretence that they were not ſuffered to de-"liver their opinion freely in the Houſe, which "could not be believed, when all men knew what "liberty Mr. Waller took, and ſpoke every day with "impu-

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"impunity againſt the ſenſe and proceedings of the "houſe."

Waller, as he continued to ſit, was one of the commiſſioners nominated by the Parliament to treat with the King at Oxford; and when they were preſented, the King ſaid to him, "Though you are the "laſt, you are not the loweſt nor the leaſt in my "favour." Whitlock, who, being another of the commiſſioners, was witneſs of this kindneſs, imputes it to the King's knowledge of the plot, in which Waller appeared afterwards to have been engaged againſt the Parliament. Fenton, with equal probability, believes that this attempt to promote the royal cauſe aroſe from his ſenſibility of the King's tenderneſs. Whitlock ſays nothing of his behaviour at Oxford: he was ſent with ſeveral others to add pomp to the commiſſion, but was not one of thoſe to whom the truſt of treating was imparted.

The engagement, known by the name of Waller's plot, was ſoon afterwards diſcovered. Waller had a brother-in-law, Tomkyns, who was clerk of the Queen's council, and at the ſame time had a very numerous acquaintance, and great influence, in the city. Waller and he, converſing with great confidence, told both their own ſecrets and thoſe of their friends; and, ſurveying the wide extent of their converſation, imagined that they found in the majority of all ranks great diſapprobation of the violence of the Commons, and unwillingneſs to continue the war. They knew that many favoured the King, whoſe fear concealed their loyalty; and many deſired peace, though they durſt not oppoſe the clamour for war; and they imagined that, if thoſe who had theſe

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good intentions could be informed of their own ſtrength, and enabled by intelligence to act together, they might overpower the fury of ſedition, by refuſing to comply with the ordinance for the twentieth part, and the other taxes levied for the ſupport of the rebel army, and by uniting great numbers in a petition for peace. They proceeded with great caution. Three only met in one place, and no man was allowed to impart the plot to more than two others; ſo that, if any ſhould be ſuſpected or ſeized, more than three could not be endangered.

Lord Conway joined in the deſign, and, Clarendon imagines, incidentally mingled, as he was a ſoldier, ſome martial hopes or projects, which however were only mentioned, the main deſign being to bring the loyal inhabitants to the knowledge of each other; for which purpoſe there was to be appointed one in every diſtrict, to diſtinguiſh the friends of the King, the adherents to the Parliament, and the neutrals. How far they proceeded does not appear; the reſult of their enquiry, as Pym declared *, was, that within the walls, for one that was for the Royaliſts, there were three againſt them; but that without the walls, for one that was againſt them, there were five for them. Whether this was ſaid from knowledge or gueſs, was perhaps never enquired.

It is the opinion of Clarendon, that in Waller's plan no violence or ſanguinary reſiſtance was compriſed; that he intended only to abate the confidence of the rebels by publick declarations, and to weaken their power by an oppoſition to new ſupplies.

* Parliamentary Hiſtory, Vol. XII. Dr. J.

This,

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This, in calmer times, and more than this, is done without fear; but ſuch was the acrimony of the Commons, that no method of obſtructing them was ſafe.

About this time another deſign was formed by Sir Nicholas Criſpe, a man of loyalty that deſerves perpetual remembrance: when he was a merchant in the city, he gave and procured the King, in his exigencies, an hundred thouſand pounds; and, when he was driven from the Exchange, raiſed a regiment, and commanded it.

Sir Nicholas flattered himſelf with an opinion, that ſome provocation would ſo much exaſperate, or ſome opportunity ſo much encourage, the King's friends in the city, that they would break out in open reſiſtance, and would then want only a lawful ſtandard, and an authoriſed commander; and extorted from the King, whoſe judgement too frequently yielded to importunity, a commiſſion of array, directed to ſuch as he thought proper to nominate, which was ſent to London by the Lady Aubigney. She knew not what ſhe carried, but was to deliver it on the communication of a certain token which Sir Nicholas imparted.

This commiſſion could be only intended to lie ready till the time ſhould require it. To have attempted to raiſe any forces, would have been certain deſtruction; it could be of uſe only when the forces ſhould appear. This was, however, an act preparatory to martial hoſtility. Criſpe would undoubtedly have put an end to the ſeſſion of Parliament, had his ſtrength been equal to his zeal; and out of the deſign of Criſpe, which involved very

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little danger, and that of Waller, which was an act purely civil, they compounded a horrid and dreadful plot.

The discovery of Waller's design is variously related. In "Clarendon's History" it is told, that a servant of Tomkyns, lurking behind the hangings when his master was in conference with Waller, heard enough to qualify him for an informer, and carried his intelligence to Pym. A manuscript, quoted in the "Life of Waller," relates, that "he "was betrayed by his sister Price, and her Presbyte-"rian chaplain Mr. Goode, who stole some of his "papers; and, if he had not strangely dreamed the "night before, that his sister had betrayed him, and "thereupon burnt the rest of his papers by the fire "that was in his chimney, he had certainly lost his "life by it." The question cannot be decided. It is not unreasonable to believe that the men in power, receiving intelligence from the sister, would employ the servant of Tomkyns to listen at the conference, that they might avoid an act so offensive as [illegible] of destroying the brother by the sister's testim[illegible].

The plot was published in the most terrifick manner.

On the 31st of May (1643), at a solemn fast, when they were listening to the sermon, a messenger entered the church, and communicated his errand to Pym, who whispered it to others that were placed near him, and then went with them out of the church, leaving the rest in solicitude and amazement. They immediately sent guards to proper places, and that night apprehended Tomkyns and Waller; having yet traced nothing but that letters had

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had been intercepted, from which it appears that the parliament and the city were ſoon to be delivered into the hands of the cavaliers.

They perhaps yet knew little themſelves, beyond ſome general and indiſtinct notices. "But Waller," ſays Clarendon, "was ſo confounded with fear, that "he confeſſed whatever he had heard, ſaid, thought, "or ſeen; all that he knew of himſelf, and all that "he ſuſpected of others, without concealing any "perſon of what degree or quality ſoever, or any "diſcourſe which he had ever upon any occaſion "entertained with them; what ſuch and ſuch ladies "of great honour, to whom, upon the credit of his "wit and great reputation, he had been admitted, "had ſpoke to him in their chambers upon the pro-"ceedings in the Houſes, and how they had encou-"raged him to oppoſe them; what correſpondence "and intercourſe they had with ſome Miniſters of "State at Oxford, and how they had conveyed all "intelligence thither." He accuſed the Earl of Portland and Lord Conway as co-operating in the tranſaction, and teſtified that the Earl of Northumberland had declared himſelf diſpoſed in favour of any attempt that might check the violence of the Parliament, and reconcile them to the King.

He undoubtedly confeſſed much which they could never have diſcovered, and perhaps ſomewhat which they would wiſh to have been ſuppreſſed; for it is inconvenient, in the conflict of factions, to have that diſaffection known which cannot ſafely be puniſhed.

Tomkyns was ſeized on the ſame night with Waller, and appears likewiſe to have partaken of his

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cowardice; for he gave notice of Crispe's commission of array, of which Clarendon never knew how it was discovered. Tomkyns had been sent with the token appointed, to demand it from Lady Aubigney, and had buried it in his garden, where, by his direction, it was dug up; and thus the rebels obtained, what Clarendon confesses them to have had, the original copy.

It can raise no wonder that they formed one plot out of these two designs, however remote from each other, when they saw the same agent employed in both, and found the commission of array in the hands of him who was employed in collecting the opinions and affections of the people.

Of the plot, thus combined, they took care to make the most. They sent Pym among the citizens, to tell them of their imminent danger, and happy escape; and inform them, that the design was, "to "seize the Lord Mayor and all the Committee of "Militia, and would not spare one of them." They drew up a vow and covenant, to be taken by every member of either House, by which he declared his detestation of all conspiracies against the Parliament, and his resolution to detect and oppose them. They then appointed a day of thanksgiving for this wonderful delivery; which shut out, says Clarendon, all doubts whether there had been such a deliverance, and whether the plot was real or fictitious.

On June 11, the Earl of Portland and Lord Conway were committed, one to the custody of the mayor, and the other of the sheriff: but their lands and goods were not seized.

Waller

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Waller was ſtill to immerſe himſelf deeper in ignominy. The Earl of Portland and Lord Conway denied the charge; and there was no evidence againſt them but the confeſſion of Waller, of which undoubtedly many would be inclined to queſtion the veracity. With theſe doubts he was ſo much terrified, that he endeavoured to perſuade Portland to a declaration like his own, by a letter extant in Fenton's edition. "But for me," ſays he, "you had "never known any thing of this buſineſs which was "prepared for another; and therefore I cannot ima-"gine why you ſhould hide it ſo far as to contract "your own ruin by concealing it, and perſiſting "unreaſonably to hide that truth, which without "you already is, and will every day be made more "manifeſt. Can you imagine yourſelf bound in "honour to keep that ſecret, which is already re-"vealed by another? or poſſible it ſhould ſtill be a "ſecret, which is known to one of the other ſex?— "If you perſiſt to be cruel to yourſelf for their "ſakes who deſerve it not, it will nevertheleſs be "made appear, ere long, I fear, to your ruin. "Surely, if I had the happineſs to wait on you, I "could move you to compaſſionate both yourſelf "and me, who, deſperate as my caſe is, am deſirous "to die with the honour of being known to have "declared the truth. You have no reaſon to contend "to hide what is already revealed—inconſiderately "to throw away yourſelf, for the intereſt of others, "to whom you are leſs obliged than you are aware "of."

This perſuaſion ſeems to have had little effect. Portland ſent (June 29) a letter to the Lords, to

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tell them, that he "is in cuſtody, as he conceives, "without any charge; and that, by what Mr. Wal-"ler hath threatened him with ſince he was impri-"ſoned, he doth apprehend a very cruel, long, and "ruinous reſtraint:—He therefore prays, that he "may not find the effects of Mr. Waller's threats, "a long and cloſe impriſonment; but may be ſpee-"dily brought to a legal trial, and then he is confi-"dent the vanity and falſehood of thoſe informa-"tions which have been given againſt him will ap-"pear."

In conſequence of this letter, the Lords ordered Portland and Waller to be confronted; when the one repeated his charge, and the other his denial. The examination of the plot being continued (July 1), Thinn, uſher of the houſe of Lords, depoſed, that Mr. Waller having had a conference with the Lord Portland in an upper room, Lord Portland ſaid, when he came down, "Do me the favour to "tell my Lord Northumberland, that Mr. Waller "has extremely preſſed me to ſave my own life and "his, by throwing the blame upon the Lord Conway "and the Earl of Northumberland."

Waller, in his letter to Portland, tells him of the reaſons which he could urge with reſiſtleſs efficacy in a perſonal conference; but he over-rated his own oratory; his vehemence, whether of perſuaſion or intreaty, was returned with contempt.

One of his arguments with Portland is, that the plot is already known to a woman. This woman was doubtleſs Lady Aubigney, who, upon this occaſion, was committed to cuſtody; but who, in reality, when

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when ſhe delivered the commiſſion, knew not what it was.

The Parliament then proceeded againſt the conſpirators, and committed their trial to a council of war. Tomkyns and Chaloner were hanged near their own doors. Tomkyns, when he came to die, ſaid it was a *fooliſh buſineſs*; and indeed there ſeems to have been no hope that it ſhould eſcape diſcovery; for, though never more than three met at a time, yet a deſign ſo extenſive muſt, by neceſſity, be communicated to many, who could not be expected to be all faithful, and all prudent. Chaloner was attended at his execution by Hugh Peters. His crime was, that he had commiſſion to raiſe money for the King; but it appears not that the money was to be expended upon the advancement of either Criſpe's or Waller's plot.

The Earl of Northumberland, being too great for proſecution, was only once examined before the Lords. The Earl of Portland and Lord Conway, perſiſting to deny the charge, and no teſtimony but Waller's yet appearing againſt them, were, after a long impriſonment, admitted to bail. Haſſel, the King's meſſenger, who carried the letters to Oxford, died the night before his trial. Hampden eſcaped death, perhaps by the intereſt of his family; but was kept in priſon to the end of his life. They whoſe names were inſerted in the commiſſion of array were not capitally puniſhed, as it could not be proved that they had conſented to their own nomination; but they were conſidered as malignants, and their eſtates were ſeized.

"Waller, though confeſſedly," ſays Clarendon, "the moſt guilty, with incredible diſſimulation af-

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"fected ſuch a remorſe of conſcience, that his trial "was put off, out of Chriſtian compaſſion, till he "might recover his underſtanding." What uſe he made of this interval, with what liberality and ſucceſs he diſtributed flattery and money, and how, when he was brought (July 4) before the Houſe, he confeſſed and lamented, and ſubmitted and implored, may be read in the Hiſtory of the Rebellion (B. vii.) The ſpeech, to which Clarendon aſcribes the preſervation of his *dear-bought life*, is inſerted in his works. The great hiſtorian, however, ſeems to have been miſtaken in relating that *he prevailed* in the principal part of his ſupplication, *not to be tried by a Council of War*; for, according to Whitlock, he was by expulſion from the houſe abandoned to the tribunal which he ſo much dreaded, and, being tried and condemned, was reprieved by Eſſex; but after a year's impriſonment, in which time reſentment grew leſs acrimonious, paying a fine of ten thouſand pounds, he was permitted to *recollect himſelf in another country*.

Of his behaviour in this part of his life, it is not neceſſary to direct the reader's opinion. "Let us "not," ſays his laſt ingenious biographer, "condemn him with untempered ſeverity, becauſe he "was not a prodigy which the world hath ſeldom "ſeen, becauſe his character included not the poet, "the orator, and the hero."

For the place of his exile he choſe France, and ſtayed ſome time at Roan, where his daughter Margaret was born, who was afterwards his favourite, and his amanuenſis. He then removed to Paris, where he lived with great ſplendor and hoſpitality; and

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and from time to time amuſed himſelf with poetry, in which he ſometimes ſpeaks of the rebels, and their uſurpation, in the natural language of an honeſt man.

At laſt it became neceſſary, for his ſupport, to ſell his wife's jewels; and being reduced, as he ſaid, at laſt *to the rump-jewel*, he ſolicited from Cromwell permiſſion to return, and obtained it by the intereſt of colonel Scroop, to whom his ſiſter was married. Upon the remains of a fortune which the danger of his life had very much diminiſhed, he lived at Hallbarn, a houſe built by himſelf very near to Beaconſfield, where his mother reſided. His mother, though related to Cromwell and Hampden, was zealous for the royal cauſe, and, when Cromwell viſited her, uſed to reproach him; he, in return, would throw a napkin at her, and ſay he would not diſpute with his aunt; but finding in time that ſhe acted for the King, as well as talked, he made her a priſoner to her own daughter, in her own houſe. If he would do any thing, he could not do leſs.

Cromwell, now Protector, received Waller, as his kinſman, to familiar converſation. Waller, as he uſed to relate, found him ſufficiently verſed in ancient hiſtory; and when any of his enthuſiaſtick friends came to adviſe or conſult him, could ſometimes overhear him diſcourſing in the cant of the times: but, when he returned, he would ſay, "Couſin "Waller, I muſt talk to theſe men in their own "way:" and reſumed the common ſtyle of converſation.

He repaid the Protector for his favours (1654) by the famous Panegyrick, which has been always conſidered

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ſidered as the firſt of his poetical productions. His choice of encomiaſtick topicks is very judicious; for he conſiders Cromwell in his exaltation, without enquiring how he attained it; there is conſequently no mention of the rebel or the regicide. All the former part of his hero's life is veiled with ſhades; and nothing is brought to view but the chief, the governor, the defender of England's honour, and the enlarger of her dominion. The act of violence by which he obtained the ſupreme power is lightly treated, and decently juſtified. It was certainly to be deſired that the deteſtable band ſhould be diſſolved, which had deſtroyed the Church, murdered the King, and filled the nation with tumult and oppreſſion; yet Cromwell had not the right of diſſolving them, for all that he had before done could be juſtified only by ſuppoſing them inveſted with lawful authority. But combinations of wickedneſs would overwhelm the world by the advantage which licentious principles afford, did not thoſe, who have long practiſed perfidy, grow faithleſs to each other.

In the poem on the war with Spain are ſome paſſages at leaſt equal to the beſt parts of the Panegyrick; and, in the concluſion, the poet ventures yet a higher flight of flattery, by recommending royalty to Cromwell and the nation. Cromwell was very deſirous, as appears from his converſation, related by Whitlock, of adding the title to the power of monarchy, and is ſuppoſed to have been with-held from it partly by fear of the army, and partly by fear of the laws, which, when he ſhould govern by the name of King, would have reſtrained his authority. When therefore a deputation was ſolemnly ſent to invite

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invite him to the Crown, he, after a long conference, refuſed it; but is ſaid to have fainted in his coach; when he parted from them.

The poem on the death of the Protector ſeems to have been dictated by real veneration for his memory. Dryden and Sprat wrote on the ſame occaſion; but they were young men, ſtruggling into notice, and hoping for ſome favour from the ruling party. Waller had little to expect; he had received nothing but his pardon from Cromwell, and was not likely to aſk any thing from thoſe who ſhould ſucceed him.

Soon afterwards, the Reſtoration ſupplied him with another ſubject; and he exerted his imagination, his elegance, and his melody, with equal alacrity, for Charles the Second. It is not poſſible to read, without ſome contempt and indignation, poems of the ſame author, aſcribing the higheſt degree of *power and piety* to Charles the Firſt, then transferring the ſame *power and piety* to Oliver Cromwell; now inviting Oliver to take the Crown, and then congratulating Charles the Second on his recovered right. Neither Cromwell nor Charles could value his teſtimony as the effect of conviction, or receive his praiſes as effuſions of reverence; they could conſider them but as the labour of invention, and the tribute of dependence.

Poets, indeed, profeſs fiction; but the legitimate end of fiction is the conveyance of truth; and he that has flattery ready for all whom the viciſſitudes of the world happen to exalt, muſt be ſcorned as a proſtituted mind, that may retain the glitter of wit, but has loſt the dignity of virtue.

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The Congratulation was considered as inferior in poetical merit to the Panegyrick; and it is reported, that, when the King told Waller of the disparity, he answered, "Poets, Sir, succeed better in fiction than "in truth."

The Congratulation is indeed not inferior to the Panegyrick, either by decay of genius, or for want of diligence; but because Cromwell had done much, and Charles had done little. Cromwell wanted nothing to raise him to heroick excellence but virtue; and virtue his poet thought himself at liberty to supply. Charles had yet only the merit of struggling without success, and suffering without despair. A life of escapes and indigence could supply poetry with no splendid images.

In the first Parliament summoned by Charles the Second (March 8, 1661), Waller sat for Hastings in Sussex, and served for different places in all the Parliaments of that reign. In a time when fancy and gaiety were the most powerful recommendations to regard, it is not likely that Waller was forgotten. He passed his time in the company that was highest, both in rank and wit, from which even his obstinate sobriety did not exclude him. Though he drank water, he was enabled by his fertility of mind to heighten the mirth of Bacchanalian assemblies; and Mr. Saville said, that "no man in England should "keep him company without drinking but Ned "Waller."

The praise given him by St. Evremond is a proof of his reputation; for it was only by his reputation that he could be known, as a writer, to a man who, though he lived a great part of a long life upon an

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an Engliſh penſion, never condeſcended to underſtand the language of the nation that maintained him.

In Parliament, "he was," ſays Burnet, "the "delight of the houſe, and though old ſaid the "liveliest things of any among them." This, however, is ſaid in his account of the year ſeventy-five, when Waller was only ſeventy. His name as a ſpeaker occurs often in Grey's Collections; but I have found no extracts that can be more quoted as exhibiting ſallies of gaiety than cogency of argument.

He was of ſuch conſideration, that his remarks were circulated and recorded. When the Duke of York's influence was high, both in Scotland and England, it drew, ſays Burnet, a lively reflection from Waller, the celebrated wit. He ſaid, "the "Houſe of Commons had reſolved that the Duke "ſhould not reign after the King's death; but the "King, in oppoſition to them, had reſolved that "he ſhould reign even in his life." If there appear no extraordinary *livelineſs* in this *remark*, yet its reception proves the ſpeaker to have been a *celebrated wit*, to have had a name which men of wit were proud of mentioning.

He did not ſuffer his reputation to die gradually away, which may eaſily happen in a long life, but renewed his claim to poetical diſtinction from time to time, as occaſions were offered, either by publick events or private incidents; and contenting himſelf with the influence of his Muſe, or loving quiet better than influence, he never accepted any office of magiſtracy.

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He was not, however, without ſome attention to his fortune; for he aſked from the King (in 1665) the provoſtſhip of Eton college, and obtained it; but Clarendon refuſed to put the ſeal to the grant, alleging that it could be held only by a clergyman. It is known that Sir Henry Wotton qualified himſelf for it by deacon's orders.

To this oppoſition, the *Biographia* imputes the violence and acrimony with which Waller joined Buckingham's faction in the proſecution of Clarendon. The motive was illiberal and diſhoneſt, and ſhewed that more than ſixty years had not been able to teach him morality. His accuſation is ſuch as conſcience can hardly be ſuppoſed to dictate without the help of malice. "We were to be governed by Janizaries "inſtead of Parliaments, and are in danger from a "worſe plot than that of the fifth of November; "then, if the Lords and Commons had been de-"ſtroyed, there had been a ſucceſſion; but here "both had been deſtroyed for ever." This is the language of a man who is glad of an opportunity to rail, and ready to ſacrifice truth to intereſt at one time, and to anger at another.

A year after the Chancellor's baniſhment, another vacancy gave him encouragement for another petition, which the King referred to the council, who, after hearing the queſtion argued by lawyers for three days, determined that the office could be held only by a clergyman, according to the act of uniformity, ſince the provoſts had always received inſtitution as for a parſonage from the biſhops of Lincoln. The King then ſaid, he could not break the law which he had made;

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made: and Dr. Zachary Cradock, famous for a single sermon, at most for two sermons, was chosen by the Fellows.

That he asked any thing more is not known; it is certain that he obtained nothing, though he continued obsequious to the Court through the rest of Charles's reign.

At the accession of King James (in 1685) he was chosen for Parliament, being then fourscore, at Saltash in Cornwall; and wrote a *Presage of the Downfall of the Turkish Empire*, which he presented to the King on his birth-day. It is remarked, by his commentator Fenton, that in reading Tasso he had early imbibed a veneration for the heroes of the Holy War, and a zealous enmity to the Turks, which never left him. James, however, having soon after begun what he thought a Holy War at home, made haste to put all molestation of the Turks out of his power.

James treated him with kindness and familiarity, of which instances are given by the writer of his life. One day taking him into the closet, the King asked him how he liked one of the pictures: "My "eyes," said Waller, "are dim, and I do not "know it." The King said it was the Princess of Orange. "She is," said Waller, "like the greatest "woman in the world." The King asked who was that; and was answered, Queen Elizabeth. "I "wonder," said the King, "you should think so; "but I must confess she had a wise council." "And, "Sir," said Waller, "did you ever know a fool "chuse a wife one?" Such is the story, which I once heard of some other man. Pointed axioms, and

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acute replies, fly loose about the world, and are assigned successively to those whom it may be the fashion to celebrate.

When the King new that he was about to marry his daughter to Dr. Birch, a clergyman, he ordered a French gentleman to tell him, that "the King "wondered he could think of marrying his daughter "to a falling Church." "The King," said Waller, "does me great honour, in taking notice of my "domestic affairs; but I have lived long enough to "observe that this falling Church has got a trick of "rising again."

He took notice to his friends of the King's conduct; and said that "he would be left like a "whale upon the strand." Whether he was privy to any of the transactions which ended in the Revolution, is not known. His heir joined the Prince of Orange.

Having now attained an age beyond which the laws of nature seldom suffer life to be extended, otherwise than by a future state, he seems to have turned his mind upon preparation for the decisive hour, and therefore consecrated his poetry to devotion. It is pleasing to discover that his piety was without weakness; that his intellectual powers continued vigorous; and that the lines which he composed when *he, for age, could neither read nor write,* are not inferior to the effusions of his youth.

Towards the decline of life, he bought a small house with a little land, at Coleshill; and said, "he "should be glad to die, like the stag, where he was "roused." This, however, did not happen. When he was at Beaconsfield, he found his legs grow tumid:

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he went to Windſor, where Sir Charles Scarborough then attended the King, and requeſted him, as both a friend and a phyſician, to tell him, *what that ſwelling meant.* "Sir," anſwered Scarborough, "your "blood will run no longer." Waller repeated ſome lines of Virgil, and went home to die.

As the diſeaſe increaſed upon him, he compoſed himſelf for his departure; and calling upon Dr. Birch to give him the holy ſacrament, he deſired his children to take it with him, and made an earneſt declaration of his faith in Chriſtianity. It now appeared what part of his converſation with the great could be remembered with delight. He related, that being preſent when the Duke of Buckingham talked profanely before King Charles, he ſaid to him, "My "Lord, I am a great deal older than your Grace, "and have, I believe, heard more arguments for "Atheiſm than ever your Grace did; but I have "lived long enough to ſee there is nothing in them; "and ſo, I hope, your Grace will."

He died October 21, 1687, and was buried at Beaconsfield, with a monument erected by his ſon's executors, for which Rymer wrote the inſcription, and which I hope is now reſcued from dilapidation.

He left ſeveral children by his ſecond wife; of whom, his daugnter was married to Dr. Birch. Benjamin, the eldeſt ſon, was diſinherited, and ſent to New Jerſey as wanting common underſtanding. Edmund, the ſecond ſon, inherited the eſtate, and repreſented Agmondeſham in Parliament, but at laſt turned Quaker. William, the third ſon, was a

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merchant in London. Stephen, the fourth, was an eminent Doctor of Laws, and one of the Commissioners for the Union. There is said to have been a fifth, of whom no account has descended.

The character of Waller, both moral and intellectual, has been drawn by Clarendon, to whom he was familiarly known, with nicety, which certainly none to whom he was not known can presume to emulate. It is therefore inserted here, with such remarks as others have supplied; after which, nothing remains but a critical examination of his poetry.

"Edmund Waller," says Clarendon, "was born "to a very fair estate, by the parsimony or fruga- "lity of a wise father and mother: and he thought "it so commendable an advantage, that he resolved "to improve it with his utmost care, upon which in "his nature he was too much intent; and, in order "to that, he was so much reserved and retired, that "he was scarcely ever heard of, till by his address "and dexterity he had gotten a very rich wife in "the city, against all the recommendation and coun- "tenance and authority of the Court, which was "thoroughly engaged on the behalf of Mr. Crofts, "and which used to be successful, in that age, against "any opposition. He had the good fortune to have "an alliance and friendship with Dr. Morley, who "had assisted and instructed him in the reading "many good books, to which his natural parts and "promptitude inclined him, especially the poets; "and at the age when other men used to give over "writing verses (for he was near thirty years when

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"he first engaged himself in that exercise, at least "that he was known to do so), he surprized the "town with two or three pieces of that kind; as if "a tenth Muse had been newly born to cherish "drooping poetry. The Doctor at that time "brought him into that company which was most "celebrated for good conversation; where he was "received and esteemed with great applause and re-"spect. He was a very pleasant discourser in ear-"nest and in jest, and therefore very grateful to all "kind of company, where he was not the less esteem-"ed for being very rich.

"He had been even nursed in parliaments, where "he sat when he was very young; and so, when they "were resumed again (after a long intermission), he "appeared in those assemblies with great advantage; "having a graceful way of speaking, and by think-"ing much on several arguments (which his temper "and complexion, that had much of melancholick, "inclined him to), he seemed often to speak upon "the sudden, when the occasion had only admi-"nistered the opportunity of saying what he had "thoroughly considered, which gave a great lustre to "all he said; which yet was rather of delight than "weight. There needs no more be said to extol the "excellence and power of his wit, and pleasantness "of his conversation, than that it was of magnitude "enough to cover a world of very great faults; that "is, so to cover them, that they were not taken no-"tice of to his reproach, viz. a narrowness in his na-"ture to the lowest degree; an abjectness and want "of courage to support him in any virtuous

"undertaking; an insinuation and servile flattery to "the height, the vainest and most imperious nature "could be contented with; that it preserved and won "his life from those who were most resolved to take "it, and in an occasion in which he ought to have "been ambitious to have lost it; and then preserved "him again from the reproach and the contempt "that was due to him for so preserving it, and for "vindicating it at such a price that it had power to "reconcile him to those whom he had most offend-"ed and provoked; and continued to his age with "that rare felicity, that his company was acceptable "where his spirit was odious; and he was at least "pitied where he was most detested."

Such is the account of Clarendon; on which it may not be improper to make some remarks.

"He was very little known till he had obtained a "rich wife in the city."

He obtained a rich wife about the age of three-and-twenty; an age, before which few men are conspicuous much to their advantage. He was known, however, in Parliament and at Court; and, if he spent part of his time in privacy, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that he endeavoured the improvement of his mind as well as of his fortune.

That Clarendon might misjudge the motive of his retirement is the more probable, because he has evidently mistaken the commencement of his poetry, which he supposes him not have attempted before thirty. As his first pieces were perhaps not printed, the succession of his compositions was not known; and Clarendon, who cannot be imagined to have been very

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very ſtudious of poetry, did not rectify his firſt opinion by conſulting Waller's book.

Clarendon obſerves, that he was introduced to the Wits of the age by Dr. Morley; but the writer of his Life relates that he was already among them, when, hearing a noiſe in the ſtreet, and enquiring the cauſe, they found a ſon of Ben Jonſon under an arreſt. This was Morley, whom Waller ſet free at the expence of one hundred pounds, took him into the country as director of his ſtudies, and then procured him admiſſion into the company of the friends of literature. Of this fact Clarendon had a nearer knowledge than the biographer, and is therefore more to be credited.

The account of Waller's parliamentary eloquence is ſeconded by Burnet, who, though he calls him "the delight of the Houſe," adds, that "he was "only concerned to ſay that which ſhould make "him be applauded, he never laid the buſineſs of "the Houſe to heart, being a vain and empty, "though a witty, man."

Of his inſinuation and flattery it is not unreaſonable to believe that the truth is told. Aſcham, in his elegant deſcription of thoſe whom in modern language we term Wits, ſays, that they are *open flatterers, and privy mockers*. Waller ſhewed a little of both, when, upon ſight of the Dutcheſs of Newcaſtle's verſes on the death of a Stag, he declared that he would give all his own compoſitions to have written them, and, being charged with the exorbitance of his adulation, anſwered, that "nothing was too much to be given, "that a lady might be ſaved from the diſgrace of

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"ſuch a vile performance." This, however, was no very miſchievous or very unuſual deviation from truth: had his hypocriſy been confined to ſuch tranſactions, he might have been forgiven, though not praiſed; for who forbears to flatter an author or a lady?

Of the laxity of his political principles, and the weakneſs of his reſolution, he experienced the natural effect, by loſing the eſteem of every party. From Cromwell he had only his recall; and from Charles the Second, who delighted in his company, he obtained only the pardon of his relation Hampden, and the ſafety of Hampden's ſon.

As far as conjecture can be made from the whole of his writing, and his conduct, he was habitually and deliberately a friend to monarchy. His deviation towards democracy proceeded from his connection with Hampden, for whoſe ſake he proſecuted Crawley with great bitterneſs; and the invective which he pronounced on that occaſion was ſo popular, that twenty thouſand copies are ſaid by his biographer to have been ſold in one day.

It is confeſſed that his faults ſtill left him many friends, at leaſt many companions. His convivial power of pleaſing is univerſally acknowledged; but thoſe who converſed with him intimately, found him not only paſſionate, eſpecially in his old age, but reſentful; ſo that the interpoſition of friends was ſometimes neceſſary.

His wit and his poetry naturally connected him with the polite writers of his time: he was joined with Lord Buckhurſt in the tranſlation of Corneille's Pom-

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Pompey; and is ſaid to have added his help to that of Cowley in the original draught of the Rehearſal.

The care of his fortune, which Clarendon imputes to him in a degree little leſs than criminal, was either not conſtant or not ſucceſsful; for, having inherited a patrimony of three thouſand five hundred pounds a year in the time of James the Firſt, and augmented it at leaſt by one wealthy marriage, he left, about the time of the Revolution, an income of not more than twelve or thirteen hundred; which, when the different value of money is reckoned, will be found perhaps not more than a fourth part of what he once poſſeſſed.

Of this diminution, part was the conſequence of the gifts which he was forced to ſcatter, and the fine which he was condemned to pay at the detection of his plot; and if his eſtate, as is related in his Life, was ſequeſtered, he had probably contracted debts when he lived in exile; for we are told, that at Paris he lived in ſplendor, and was the only Engliſhman, except the Lord St. Albans, that kept a table.

His unlucky plot compelled him to ſell a thouſand a year; of the waſte of the reſt there is no account, except that he is confeſſed by his biographer to have been a bad œconomiſt. He ſeems to have deviated from the common practice; to have been a hoarder in his firſt years, and a ſquanderer in his laſt.

Of his courſe of ſtudies, or choice of books, nothing is known more than that he profeſſed himſelf unable to read Chapman's tranſlation of Homer without rapture. His opinion concerning the duty of a poet is contained in his declaration, that "he would

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"blot from his works any line that did not contain "some motive to virtue."

THE characters, by which Waller intended to distinguish his writing, are sprightliness and dignity; in his smallest pieces, he endeavours to be gay; in the larger to be great. Of his airy and light productions, the chief source is gallantry, that attentive reverence of female excellence which has descended to us from the Gothic ages. As his poems are commonly occasional, and his addresses personal, he was not so liberally supplied with grand as with soft images; for beauty is more easily found than magnanimity.

The delicacy, which he cultivated, restrains him to a certain nicety and caution, even when he writes upon the slightest matter. He has, therefore, in his whole volume, nothing burlesque, and seldom any thing ludicrous or familiar. He seems always to do his best; though his subjects are often unworthy of his care.

It is not easy to think without some contempt on an author, who is growing illustrious in his own opinion by verses, at one time, "To a Lady who can "do any thing but sleep when she pleases;" at another, "To a Lady who can sleep when she pleases;" now, "To a Lady, on her passing through a crowd "of people;" then, "On a braid of divers colours "woven by four Ladies;" "On a tree cut in paper;" or, "To a Lady, from whom he received the copy "of verses on the paper-tree, which for many "years had been missing."

Genius now and then produces a lucky trifle. We still read the *Dove* of Anacreon, and *Sparrow* of Catullus; and a writer naturally pleases himself with a per-

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a performance, which owes nothing to the subject. But compositions merely pretty have the fate of other pretty things, and are quitted in time for something useful; they are flowers fragrant and fair, but of short duration; or they are blossoms to be valued only as they foretell fruits.

Among Waller's little poems are some, which their excellency ought to secure from oblivion; as, *To Amoret*, comparing the different modes of regard with which he looks on her and *Sacharissa*; and the verses *On Love*, that begin, *Anger in hasty words or blows.*

In others he is not equally successful; sometimes his thoughts are deficient, and sometimes his expression.

The numbers are not always musical; as,

Fair Venus, in thy soft arms
  The god of rage confine;
For thy whispers are the charms
  Which only can divert his fierce design.
What though he frown, and to tumult do incline;
  Thou the flame
  Kindled in his breast canst tame
With that snow which unmelted lies on thine.

He seldom indeed fetches an amorous sentiment from the depths of science; his thoughts are for the most part easily understood, and his images such as the superficies of nature readily supplies; he has a just claim to popularity, because he writes to common degrees of knowledge; and is free at least from philosophical pedantry, unless perhaps the end of a song *to the Sun* may be excepted, in which he is too much a Copernican. To which may be added the simile

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ſimile of the *Palm* in the verſes *on her paſſing through a crowd*; and a line in a more ſerious poem on the *Reſtoration*, about vipers and treacle, which can only be underſtood by thoſe who happen to know the compoſition of the *Theriaca*.

His thoughts are ſometimes hyperbolical, and his images unnatural:

—The plants admire,
No leſs than thoſe of old did Orpheus' lyre:
If ſhe ſit down, with tops all tow'rds her bow'd;
They round about her into arbours crow'd:
Or if ſhe walks, in even ranks they ſtand,
Like ſome well-marſhal'd and obſequious band.

In another place:

While in the park I ſing, the liſtening deer
Attend my paſſion, and forget to fear:
When to the beeches I report my flame,
They bow their heads, as if they felt the ſame.
To gods appealing, when I reach their bowers,
With loud complaints they anſwer me in ſhowers.
To thee a wild and cruel ſoul is given,
More deaf than trees, and prouder than the Heaven!

On the head of a ſtag:

O fertile head! which every year
Could ſuch a crop of wonder bear?
The teeming Earth did never bring,
So ſoon, ſo hard, ſo huge a thing:
Which might it never have been caſt,
Each year's growth added to the laſt,
Theſe lofty branches had ſupply'd
The Earth's bold ſon's prodigious pride;
Heaven with theſe engines had been ſeal'd,
When mountains heap'd on mountains fail'd.

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Sometimes having ſucceeded in the firſt part, he makes a feeble concluſion. In the ſong of "Sacha-"riſſa's and Amoret's Friendſhip," the two laſt ſtanzas ought to have been omitted.

His images of gallantry are not always in the higheſt degree delicate.

Then ſhall my love this doubt diſplace,
And gain ſuch truſt that I may come
And banquet ſometimes on thy face,
But make my conſtant meals at home.

Some applications may be thought too remote and unconſequential; as in the verſes on the *Lady Dancing*:

The ſun in figures ſuch as theſe
Joys with the moon to play:
To the ſweet ſtrains they advance,
Which do reſult from their own ſpheres;
As this nymph's dance
Moves with the numbers which ſhe hears.

Sometimes a thought, which might perhaps fill a diſtich, is expanded and attenuated till it grows weak and almoſt evaneſcent.

Chloris! ſince firſt our calm of peace
Was frighted hence, this good we find,
Your favours with your fears increaſe,
And growing miſchiefs make you kind.
So the fair tree, which ſtill preſerves
Her fruit, and ſtate, while no wind blows,
In ſtorms from that uprightneſs ſwerves;
And the glad earth about her ſtrows
With treaſure from her yielding boughs.

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His images are not always diſtinct; as, in the following paſſage, he confounds *Love* as a perſon with *Love* as a paſſion:

Some other nymphs, with colours faint,
And pencil ſlow, may Cupid paint,
And a weak heart in time deſtroy;
She has a ſtamp, and prints the boy:
Can, with a ſingle look, inflame
The coldeſt breaſt, the rudeſt tame.

His ſallies of caſual flattery are ſometimes elegant and happy, as that *in return for the Silver Pen*; and ſometimes empty and trifling, as that *upon the Card torn by the Queen*. There are a few lines *written in the Dutcheſs's Taſſo*, which he is ſaid by Fenton to have kept a ſummer under correction. It happened to Waller, as to others, that his ſucceſs was not always in proportion to his labour.

Of theſe petty compoſitions, neither the beauties nor the faults deſerve much attention. The amorous verſes have this to recommend them, that they are leſs hyperbolical than thoſe of ſome other poets. Waller is not always at the laſt gaſp; he does not die of a frown, nor live upon a ſmile. There is, however, too much love, and too many trifles. Little things are made too important; and the Empire of Beauty is repreſented as exerting its influence further than can be allowed by the multiplicity of human paſſions, and the variety of human wants. Such books, therefore, may be conſidered as ſhewing the world under a falſe appearance, and, ſo far as they obtain credit from the young and unexperienced, as miſleading expectation, and miſguiding practice.

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Of his nobler and more weighty performances, the greater part is panegyrical: for of praiſe he was very laviſh, as is obſerved by his imitator, Lord Lanſdowne:

> No ſatyr ſtalks within the hallow'd ground,
> But queens and heroines, kings and gods abound;
> Glory and arms and love are all the ſound.

In the firſt poem, on the danger of the Prince on the coaſt of Spain, there is a puerile and ridiculous mention of Arion at the beginning; and the laſt paragraph, on the *Cable*, is in part ridiculouſly mean, and in part ridiculouſly tumid. The poem, however, is ſuch as may be juſtly praiſed, without much allowance for the ſtate of our poetry and language at that time.

The two next poems are upon the King's *behaviour at the death of* Buckingham, and upon his *Navy*.

He has, in the firſt, uſed the Pagan deities with great propriety:

> 'Twas want of ſuch a precedent as this
> Made the old Heathens frame their gods amiſs.

In the poem on the Navy, thoſe lines are very noble which ſuppoſe the King's power ſecure againſt a ſecond Deluge; ſo noble, that it were almoſt criminal to remark the miſtake of *centre* for *ſurface*, or to ſay that the empire of the ſea would be worth little if it were not that the waters terminate in land.

The poem upon Sallee has forcible ſentiments; but the concluſion is feeble. That on the Repairs of St. Paul's has ſomething vulgar and obvious; ſuch

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as the mention of Amphion; and ſomething violent and harſh: as,

So all our minds with his conſpire to grace
The Gentiles' great apoſtle, and deface
Thoſe ſtate-obſcuring ſheds, that like a chain
Seem'd to confine, and fetter him again:
Which the glad ſaint ſhakes off at his command,
As once the viper from his ſacred hand.
So joys the aged oak, when we divide
The creeping ivy from his injur'd ſide.

Of the two laſt couplets, the firſt is extravagant, and the ſecond mean.

His praiſe of the Queen is too much exaggerated; and the thought, that ſhe "ſaves lovers, by cutting "off hope, as gangrenes are cured by lopping the "limb," preſents nothing to the mind but diſguſt and horror.

Of the *Battle of the Summer Iſlands*, it ſeems not eaſy to ſay whether it is intended to raiſe terror or merriment. The beginning is too ſplendid for jeſt, and the concluſion too light for ſerioufneſs. The verſification is ſtudied, the ſcenes are diligently diſplayed, and the images artfully amplified; but, as it ends neither in joy or ſorrow, it will ſcarcely be read a ſecond time.

The *Panegyrick* upon Cromwell has obtained from the publick a very liberal dividend of praiſe, which however cannot be ſaid to have been unjuſtly laviſhed; for ſuch a ſeries of verſes had rarely appeared before in the Engliſh language. Of the lines ſome are grand, ſome are graceful, and all are muſical. There is

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is now and then a feeble verſe, or a trifling thought; but its great fault is the choice of its hero.

The poem of *The War with Spain* begins with lines more vigorous and ſtriking than Waller is accuſtomed to produce. The ſucceeding parts are variegated with better paſſages and worſe. There is ſomething too far-fetched in the compariſon of the Spaniards drawing the Engliſh on, by ſaluting St. Lucar with cannon, *to lambs awakening the lion by bleating*. The fate of the Marquis and his Lady, who were burnt in their ſhip, would have moved more, had the poet not made him die like the Phœnix, becauſe he had ſpices about him, nor expreſſed their affection and their end by a conceit at once falſe and vulgar:

> Alive, in equal flames of love they burn'd,
> And now together are to aſhes turn'd.

The verſes to Charles, on his Return, were doubtleſs intended to counterbalance the Panegyrick on Cromwell. If it has been thought inferior to that with which it is naturally compared, the cauſe of its deficience has been already remarked.

The remaining pieces it is not neceſſary to examine ſingly. They muſt be ſuppoſed to have faults and beauties of the ſame kind with the reſt. The Sacred Poems, however, deſerve particular regard; they were the work of Waller's declining life, of thoſe hours in which he looked upon the fame and the folly of the time paſt with the ſentiments which his great predeceſſor Petrarch bequeathed to poſterity, upon his review of that love and poetry which have given him immortality.

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That natural jealouſy which makes every man unwilling to allow much excellence in another, always produces a diſpoſition to believe that the mind grows old with the body; and that he, whom we are now forced to confeſs ſuperior, is haſtening daily to a level with ourſelves. By delighting to think this of the living, we learn to think it of the dead; and Fenton, with all his kindneſs for Waller, has the luck to mark the exact time when his genius paſſed the zenith, which he places at his fifty-fifth year. This is to allot the mind but a ſmall portion. Intellectual decay is doubtleſs not uncommon; but it ſeems not to be univerſal. Newton was in his eighty-fifth year improving his chronology, a few days before his death; and Waller appears not, in my opinion, to have loſt at eighty-two any part of his poetical power.

His Sacred Poems do not pleaſe like ſome of his other works; but before the fatal fifty-five, had he written on the ſame ſubjects, his ſucceſs would hardly have been better.

It has been the frequent lamentation of good men, that verſe has been too little applied to the purpoſes of worſhip, and many attempts have been made to animate devotion by pious poetry. That they have very ſeldom attained their end is ſufficiently known, and it may not be improper to enquire why they have miſcarried.

Let no pious ear be offended if I advance, in oppoſition to many authorities, that poetical devotion cannot often pleaſe. The doctrines of Religion may indeed be defended in a didactick poem; and he, who has the happy power of arguing in verſe, will not

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not lose it because his subject is sacred. A poet may describe the beauty and the grandeur of Nature, the flowers of the Spring, and the harvests of Autumn, the vicissitudes of the Tide, and the revolutions of the Sky, and praise the Maker for his works, in lines which no reader shall lay aside. The subject of the disputation is not piety, but the motives to piety; that of the description is not God, but the works of God.

Contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, cannot be poetical. Man, admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer.

The essence of poetry is invention; such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights. The topicks of devotion are few, and being few are universally known; but, few as they are, they can be made no more; they can receive no grace from novelty of sentiment, and very little from novelty of expression.

Poetry pleases by exhibiting an idea more grateful to the mind than things themselves afford. This effect proceeds from the display of those parts of nature which attract, and the concealment of those which repel, the imagination: but religion must be shewn as it is; suppression and addition equally corrupt it; and such as it is, it is known already.

From poetry the reader justly expects, and from good poetry always obtains, the enlargement of his comprehension and elevation of his fancy; but this is rarely to be hoped by Christians from metrical devotion. Whatever is great, desirable, or tremen-

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dous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted; Infinity cannot be amplified; Perfection cannot be improved.

The employments of pious meditation are Faith, Thanksgiving, Repentance, and Supplication. Faith, invariably uniform, cannot be invested by fancy with decorations. Thanksgiving, the most joyful of all holy effusions, yet addressed to a Being without passions, is confined to a few modes, and is to be felt rather than expressed. Repentance, trembling in the presence of the judge, is not at leisure for cadences and epithets. Supplication of man to man may diffuse itself through many topicks of persuasion; but supplication to God can only cry for mercy.

Of sentiments purely religious, it will be found that the most simple expression is the most sublime. Poetry loses its lustre and its power, because it is applied to the decoration of something more excellent than itself. All that pious verse can do is to help the memory, and delight the ear, and for these purposes it may be very useful; but it supplies nothing to the mind. The ideas of Christian Theology are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fiction, and too majestick for ornament; to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the sidereal hemisphere.

As much of Waller's reputation was owing to the softness and smoothness of his Numbers; it is proper to consider those minute particulars to which a versifier must attend.

He certainly very much excelled in smoothness most of the writers who were living when his poetry

 commenced,

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commenced. The Poets of Elizabeth had attained an art of modulation, which was afterwards neglected or forgotten. Fairfax was acknowledged by him as his model; and he might have ſtudied with advantage the poem of Davies *, which, though merely philoſophical, yet ſeldom leaves the ear ungratified.

But he was rather ſmooth than ſtrong; of *the full reſounding line*, which Pope attributes to Dryden, he has given very few examples. The critical deciſion has given the praiſe of ſtrength to Denham, and of ſweetneſs to Waller.

His excellence of verſification has ſome abatements. He uſes the expletive *do* very frequently; and, though he lived to ſee it almoſt univerſally ejected, was not more careful to avoid it in his laſt compoſitions than in his firſt. Praiſe had given him confidence; and finding the world ſatisfied, he ſatisfied himſelf.

His rhymes are ſometimes weak words: *ſo* is found to make the rhyme twice in ten lines, and occurs often as a rhyme through his book.

His double rhymes, in heroick verſe, have been cenſured by Mrs. Phillips, who was his rival in the tranſlation of Corneille's Pompey; and more faults might be found, were not the enquiry below attention.

He ſometimes uſes the obſolete termination of verbs, as *waxeth*, *affecteth*; and ſometimes retains

* Sir John Davies, intituled, "Noſce teipſum. This Oracle "expounded in two Elegies; I. Of Humane Knowledge; "II. Of the Soule of Man and the Immortalitie thereof, "1599." R.

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the final ſyllable of the preterite, as *amazed*, *ſuppoſed*, of which I know not whether it is not to the detriment of our language that we have totally rejected them.

Of triplets he is ſparing; but he did not wholly forbear them; of an Alexandrine he has given no example.

The general character of his poetry is elegance and gaiety. He is never pathetick, and very rarely ſublime. He ſeems neither to have had a mind much elevated by nature, nor amplified by learning. His thoughts are ſuch as a liberal converſation and large acquaintance with life would eaſily ſupply. They had however then, perhaps, that grace of novelty which they are now often ſuppoſed to want by thoſe who, having already found them in later books, do not know or enquire who produced them firſt. This treatment is unjuſt. Let not the original author loſe by his imitators.

Praiſe, however, ſhould be due before it is given. The author of Waller's Life aſcribes to him the firſt practiſe of what Erythræus and ſome late criticks call *Alliteration*, of uſing in the ſame verſe many words beginning with the ſame letter. But this knack, whatever be its value, was ſo frequent among early writers, that Gaſcoigne, a writer of the ſixteenth century, warns the young poet againſt affecting it: Shakſpeare, in the *Midſummer Night's Dream*, is ſuppoſed to ridicule it; and in another play the ſonnet of Holofernes fully diſplays it.

He borrows too many of his ſentiments and illuſtrations from the old Mythology, for which it is vain to plead the example of ancient poets: the deities, which they introduced ſo frequently, were conſidered

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as realities, ſo far as to be received by the imagination, whatever ſober reaſon might even then determine. But of theſe images time has tarniſhed the ſplendor. A fiction, not only detected but deſpiſed, can never afford a ſolid baſis to any poſition, though ſometimes it may furniſh a tranſient alluſion, or ſlight illuſtration. No modern monarch can be much exalted by hearing that, as Hercules had his *club*, he has his *navy*.

But of the praiſe of Waller, though much may be taken away, much will remain; for it cannot be denied that he added ſomething to our elegance of diction, and ſomething to our propriety of thought; and to him may be applied what Taſſo ſaid, with equal ſpirit and juſtice, of himſelf and Guarini, when, having peruſed the *Paſtor Fido*, he cried out, "If "he had not read *Aminta*, he had not excelled it."

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AS Waller profeſſed himſelf to have learned the art of verſification from Fairfax, it has been thought proper to ſubjoin a ſpecimen of his work, which, after Mr. Hoole's tranſlation, will perhaps not be ſoon reprinted. By knowing the ſtate in which Waller found our poetry, the reader may judge how much he improved it.

1.

Erminia's ſteed (this while) his miſtreſſe bore
Through forreſts thicke among the ſhadie treene,
Her feeble hand the bridle raines forelore,
Halfe in a ſwoune ſhe was for feare I weene;
But her flit courſer ſpared nere the more,
To beare her through the deſart woods unſeene
Of her ſtrong foes, that chas'd her through the plaine,
And ſtill purſu'd, but ſtill purſu'd in vaine.

2.

Like as the wearie hounds at laſt retire,
Windleſſe, diſpleaſed, from the fruitleſſe chace,
When the ſlie beaſt Tapiſht in buſh and brire,
No art nor pains can rowſe out of his place:
The Chriſtian knights ſo full of ſhame and ire
Returned backe, with faint and wearie pace!
Yet ſtill the fearfull Dame fled, ſwift as winde,
Nor euer ſtaid, nor euer lookt behinde.

3.

Through thicke and thinne, all night, all day, ſhe driued,
Withouten comfort, companie, or guide,
Her plaints and teares with euery thought reuiued,
She heard and ſaw her greefes, but nought beſide.
But when the ſunne his burning chariot diued
In Thetis waue, and wearie teame vntide,
On Iordans ſandie banks her courſe ſhe ſtaid,
At laſt, there downe ſhe light, and downe ſhe laid.

4. Her

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4.

Her teares, her drinke; her food, her ſorrowings,
This was her diet that vnhappie night:
But ſleepe (that ſweet repoſe and quiet brings)
To eaſe the greefes of diſcontented wight,
Spred foorth his tender, ſoft, and nimble wings,
In his dull armes foulding the virgin bright;
And loue, his mother, and the graces kept
Strong watch and warde, while this faire Ladie ſlept.

5.

The birds awakte her with their morning ſong,
Their warbling muſicke pearſt her tender eare,
The murmuring brookes and whiſtling windes among
The ratling boughes, and leaues, their parts did beare;
Her eies vnclos'd beheld the groues along
Of ſwaines and ſhepherd groomes, that dwellings weare;
And that ſweet noiſe, birds, winds, and waters ſent,
Prouokt again the virgin to lament.

6.

Her plaints were interrupted with a ſound,
That ſeem'd from thickeſt buſhes to proceed,
Some iolly ſhepherd ſung a luſtie round,
And to his voice had tun'd his oaten reed;
Thither ſhe went, an old man there ſhe found
(At whoſe right hand his little flock did feed)
Sat making baſkets, his three ſonnes among
That learn'd their fathers art, and learn'd his ſong.

7.

Beholding one in ſhining armes appeare
The ſeelie man and his were ſore diſmaid;
But ſweet Erminia comforted their feare,
Her ventall vp, her viſage open laid,
You happy folke, of heau'n beloued deare,
Work on (quoth ſhe) upon your harmleſſe traid,
Theſe dreadfull armes I beare no warfare bring
To your ſweet toile, nor thoſe ſweet tunes you ſing.

8. But

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8.

But father, ſince this land, theſe townes and towres,
Deſtroied are with ſword, with fire and ſpoile,
How may it be unhurt, that you and yours
In ſafetie thus, applie your harmleſſe toile?
My ſonne (quoth he) this pore eſtate of ours
Is euer ſafe from ſtorm of warlike broile;
This wilderneſſe doth vs in ſaftie keepe,
No thundring drum, no trumpet breakes our ſleepe.

9.

Haply iuſt heau'ns defence and ſhield of right,
Doth loue the innocence of ſimple ſwains,
The thunderbolts on higheſt mountains light,
And ſeld or neuer ſtrike the lower plaines:
So kings have cauſe to feare *Bellonaes* might,
Not they whoſe ſweat and toile their dinner gaines,
Nor ever greedie ſoldier was entiſed
By pouertie, neglected and deſpiſed.

10.

O Pouertie, cheſe of the heau'nly brood,
Dearer to me than wealth or kingly crowne!
No wiſh for honour, thirſt of others good,
Can moue my heart, contented with mine owne:
We quench our thirſt with water of this flood,
Nor fear we poiſon ſhould therein be throwne:
Theſe little flocks of ſheepe and tender goates
Giue milke for food, and wool to make us coates.

11.

We little wiſh, we need but little wealth,
From cold and hunger vs to cloath and feed;
Theſe are my ſonnes, their care preſerues from ſtealth
Their fathers flocks, nor ſervants moe I need:
Amid theſe groues I walke oft for my health,
And to the fiſhes, birds, and beaſtes giue heed,
How they are fed, in forreſt, ſpring and lake,
And their contentment for enſample take.

12. Time

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12.

Time was (or each one hath his doting time,
Thefe filuer locks were golden treffes than)
That countrie life I hated as a crime,
And from the forrefts fweet contentment ran,
To Memphis' ftately pallace would I clime,
And there became the mightie Caliphes man,
And though I but a fimple gardner weare,
Yet could I marke abufes, fee and heare.

13.

Entifed on with hope of future gaine,
I fuffred long what did my foule difpleafe;
But when my youth was fpent, my hope was vaine,
I felt my native ftrength at laft decreafe;
I gan my loffe of luftie yeeres complaine,
And wifht I had enjoy'd the countries peace;
I bod the court farewell, and with content
My later age here have I quiet fpent.

14.

While thus he fpake, Erminia hufht and ftill
His wife difcourfes heard, with great attention,
His fpeeches graue thofe idle fancies kill,
Which in her troubled foule bred fuch diffention;
After much thought reformed was her will,
Within thofe woods to dwell was her intention,
Till fortune fhould occafion new afford,
To turne her home to her defired Lord.

15.

She faid therefore, O fhepherd fortunate!
That troubles fome didft whilom feele and proue,
Yet liueft now in this contented ftate,
Let my mifhap thy thoughts to pitie moue,
To entertaine me as a willing mate
In fhepherds life, which I admire and loue;
Within thefe pleafant groues perchance my hart,
Of her difcomforts, may vnload fome part.

16. If

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16.

If gold or wealth of moſt eſteemed deare,
If iewels rich, thou diddeſt hold in priſe,
Such ſtore thereof, ſuch plentie haue I ſeen,
As to a greedie minde might well ſuffice:
With that downe trickled many a ſiluer teare,
Two chriſtall ſtreames fell from her watrie eies;
Part of her ſad misfortunes than ſhe told,
And wept, and with her wept that ſhepherd old.

17.

With ſpeeches kinde, he gan the virgin deare
Towards his cottage gently home to guide;
His aged wife there made her homely cheare,
Yet welcomde her, and plaſt her by her ſide.
The Princeſſe dond a poore paſtoraes geare,
A kerchiefe courſe vpon her head ſhe tide;
But yet her geſtures and her lookes (I geſſe)
Were ſuch, as ill beſeem'd a ſhepherdeſſe.

18.

Not thoſe rude garments could obſcure, and hide
The heau'nly beautie of her angels face,
Nor was her princely ofspring damnifide,
Or ought diſparag'de, by thoſe labours bace;
Her little flocks to paſture would ſhe guide,
And milk her goates, and in their folds them place,
Both cheeſe and butter could ſhe make, and frame
Her ſelfe to pleaſe the ſhepherd and his dame.

POMFRET.

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POMFRET.

OF Mr. JOHN POMFRET nothing is known but from a ſlight and confuſed account prefixed to his poems by a nameleſs friend; who relates, that he was the ſon of the Rev. Mr. Pomfret, rector of Luton, in Bedfordſhire; that he was bred at Cambridge *; entered into orders, and was rector of Malden in Bedfordſhire, and might have riſen in the Church; but that, when he applied to Dr. Compton biſhop of London, for inſtitution to a living of conſiderable value, to which he had been preſented, he found a troubleſome obſtruction raiſed by a malicious interpretation of ſome paſſage in his *Choice*; from which it was inferred, that he conſidered happineſs as more likely to be found in the company of a miſtreſs than of a wife.

This reproach was eaſily obliterated: for it had happened to Pomfret as to almoſt all other men who plan ſchemes of life; he had departed from his purpoſe, and was then married.

* He was of Queen's College there, and, by the University-regiſter, appears to have taken his Bachelor's degree in 1684, and his Maſter's 1698. H.

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The malice of his enemies had however a very fatal consequence: the delay constrained his attendance in London, where he caught the small-pox, and died in 1703, in the thirty-sixth year of his age.

He published his poems in 1699; and has been always the favourite of that class of readers, who, without vanity or criticism, seek only their own amusement.

His *Choice* exhibits a system of life adapted to common notions, and equal to common expectations; such a state as affords plenty and tranquillity, without exclusion of intellectual pleasures. Perhaps no composition in our language has been oftener perused than Pomfret's *Choice*.

In his other poems there is an easy volubility; the pleasure of smooth metre is afforded to the ear, and the mind is not oppressed with ponderous or entangled with intricate sentiment. He pleases many; and he who pleases many must have some species of merit.

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DORSET.

OF the Earl of Dorſet the character has been drawn ſo largely and ſo elegantly by Prior, to whom he was familiarly known, that nothing can be added by a caſual hand; and, as its author is ſo generally read, it would be uſeleſs officiouſneſs to tranſcribe it.

CHARLES SACKVILLE was born January 24, 1637. Having been educated under a private tutor, he travelled into Italy, and returned a little before the Reſtoration. He was choſen into the firſt parliament that was called, for Eaſt Grinſtead in Suſſex, and ſoon became a favourite of Charles the Second; but undertook no publick employment, being too eager of the riotous and licentious pleaſures which young men of high rank, who aſpired to be thought Wits, at that time imagined themſelves intitled to indulge.

One of theſe frolicks has, by the induſtry of Wood, come down to poſterity. Sackville, who was then Lord Buckhurſt, with Sir Charles Sedley and Sir Thomas Ogle, got drunk at the Cock in Bow-

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Bow-ſtreet, by Covent-garden, and, going into the balcony, expoſed themſelves to the populace in very indecent poſtures. At laſt, as they grew warmer, Sedley ſtood forth naked, and harangued the populace in ſuch profane language, that the public indignation was awakened; the crowd attempted to force the door, and, being repulſed, drove in the performers with ſtones, and broke the windows of the houſe.

For this miſdemeanour they were indicted, and Sedley was fined five hundred pounds: what was the ſentence of the others is not known. Sedley employed Killigrew and another to procure a remiſſion from the King; but (mark the friendſhip of the diſſolute!) they begged the fine for themſelves, and exacted it to the laſt groat.

In 1665, Lord Buckhurſt attended the Duke of York as a volunteer in the Dutch war; and was in the battle of June 3, when eighteen great Dutch ſhips were taken, fourteen others were deſtroyed, and Opdam the admiral, who engaged the Duke, was blown up beſide him, with all his crew.

On the day before the battle, he is ſaid to have compoſed the celebrated ſong, *To all you Ladies now at land*, with equal tranquillity of mind and promptitude of wit. Seldom any ſplendid ſtory is wholly true. I have heard, from the late Earl of Orrery, who was likely to have good hereditary intelligence, that Lord Buckhurſt had been a week employed upon it, and only retouched or finiſhed it on the memorable evening. But even this, whatever it may ſubtract from his facility, leaves him his courage.

He

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He was ſoon after made a gentleman of the bed-chamber, and ſent on ſhort embaſſies to France.

In 1674, the eſtate of his uncle James Cranfield, Earl of Middleſex, came to him by its owner's death, and the title was conferred on him the year after. In 1677, he became, by the death of his father, Earl of Dorſet, and inherited the eſtate of his family.

In 1684, having buried his firſt wife, of the family of Bagot, who left him no child, he married a daughter of the Earl of Northampton, celebrated both for beauty and underſtanding.

He received ſome favourable notice from King James; but ſoon found it neceſſary to oppoſe the violence of his innovations, and with ſome other lords appeared in Weſtminſter-hall to countenance the biſhops at their trial.

As enormities grew every day leſs ſupportable, he found it neceſſary to concur in the Revolution. He was one of thoſe lords who ſat every day in council to preſerve the publick peace, after the King's departure; and, what is not the moſt illuſtrious action of his life, was employed to conduct the Princeſs Anne to Nottingham with a guard, ſuch as might alarm the populace, as they paſſed, with falſe apprehenſions of her danger. Whatever end may be deſigned, there is always ſomething deſpicable in a trick.

He became, as may be eaſily ſuppoſed, a favourite of King William, who, the day after his acceſſion, made him lord chamberlain of the houſehold, and gave him afterwards the garter. He happened to be among thoſe that were toſſed with the King in an open boat ſixteen hours, in very rough and cold

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weather, on the coaſt of Holland. His health afterwards declined; and on January 19, 1705-6, he died at Bath.

He was a man whoſe elegance and judgement were univerſally confeſſed, and whoſe bounty to the learned and witty was generally known. To the indulgent affection of the publick, Lord Rocheſter bore ample teſtimony in this remark: *I know not how it is, but* Lord Buckhurſt *may do what he will, yet is never in the wrong.*

If ſuch a man attempted poetry, we cannot wonder that his works were praiſed. Dryden, whom, if Prior tells truth, he diſtinguiſhed by his beneficence, and who laviſhed his blandiſhments on thoſe who are not known to have ſo well deſerved them, undertaking to produce authors of our own country ſuperior to thoſe of antiquity, ſays, *I would inſtance your Lordſhip in ſatire, and Shakſpeare in tragedy.* Would it be imagined that, of this rival to antiquity, all the ſatires were little perſonal invectives, and that his longeſt compoſition was a ſong of eleven ſtanzas?

The blame, however, of this exaggerated praiſe falls on the encomiaſt, not upon the author; whoſe performances are, what they pretend to be, the effuſions of a man of wit; gay, vigorous, and airy. His verſes to Howard ſhew great fertility of mind; and his *Dorinda* has been imitated by Pope.

STEP-

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STEPNEY.

GEORGE STEPNEY, deſcended from the Stepneys of Pendigraſt in Pembrokeſhire, was born at Weſtminſter in 1663. Of his father's condition or fortune I have no account. Having received the firſt part of his education at Weſtminſter, where he paſſed ſix years in the College, he went at nineteen to Cambridge *, where he continued a friendſhip begun at ſchool with Mr. Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax. They came to London together, and are ſaid to have been invited into publick life by the Duke of Dorſet.

His qualifications recommended him to many foreign employments, ſo that his time ſeems to have been ſpent in negociations. In 1692 he was ſent envoy to the Elector of Brandenburgh: in 1693, to the Imperial Court; in 1694, to the Elector of Saxony; in 1696, to the Electors of Mentz and Cologne, and the Congreſs at Francfort; in 1698, a ſecond time to Brandenburgh; in 1699, to the King of Poland; in 1701, again to the Emperor; and in 1706,

* He was entered of Trinity College, and took his Maſter's degree in 1689. H.

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to the States General. In 1697 he was made one of the commissioners of trade. His life was busy, and not long. He died in 1707; and is buried in Westminster Abbey, with this epitaph, which *Jacob* transcribed:

H. S. E.
GEORGIUS STEPNEIUS, Armiger,
Vir
Ob Ingenii acumen,
Literarum Scientiam,
Morum Suavitatem,
Rerum Usum,
Virorum Amplissimorum Consuetudinem,
Linguæ, Styli, ac Vitæ Elegantiam,
Præclara Officia cum Britanniæ tum Europæ præstita,
Sua ætate multum celebratus,
Apud posteros semper celebrandus;
Plurimas Legationes obiit
Ea Fide, Diligentia, ac Felicitate,
Ut Augustissimorum Principum
Gulielmi & Annæ
Spem in illo repositam
Nunquam fefellerit,
Haud raro superaverit.
Post longum honorum Cursum
Brevi Temporis Spatio confectum,
Cum Naturæ parum, Famæ satis vixerat,
Animam ad altiora aspirantem placide efflavit.

On the Left hand,

G. S.
Ex Equestri Familia Stepneiorum,
De Pendegrast, in Comitatu
Pembrochiensi oriundus,
Westmonasterii natus est, A. D. 1663.

Electus

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Electus in Collegium
Sancti Petri Westmonast. A. 1676.
Sancti Trinitatis Cantab. 1682.
Consiliariorum quibus Commercii
Cura commissa est 1697.
Chelseiæ mortuus, &, comitante
Magna Procerum
Frequentia, huc elatus, 1707.

It is reported that the juvenile compositions of Stepney *made grey authors blush*. I know not whether his poems will appear such wonders to the present age. One cannot always easily find the reason for which the world has sometimes conspired to squander praise. It is not very unlikely that he wrote very early as well as he ever wrote; and the performances of youth have many favourers, because the authors yet lay no claim to publick honours, and are therefore not considered as rivals by the distributors of fame.

He apparently professed himself a poet, and added his name to those of the other wits in the version of Juvenal; but he is a very licentious translator, and does not recompense his neglect of the author by beauties of his own. In his original poems, now and then, a happy line may perhaps be found, and now and then a short composition may give pleasure. But there is, in the whole, little either of the grace of wit, or the vigour of nature.

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J. PHILIPS.

JOHN PHILIPS was born on the 30th of December, 1676, at Bampton in Oxfordſhire; of which place his father Dr. Stephen Philips, archdeacon of Salop, was miniſter. The firſt part of his education was domeſtick; after which he was ſent to Wincheſter, where, as we are told by Dr. Sewel, his biographer, he was ſoon diſtinguiſhed by the ſuperiority of his exerciſes; and, what is leſs eaſily to be credited, ſo much endeared himſelf to his ſchoolfellows by his civility and good nature, that they, without murmur or ill-will, ſaw him indulged by the maſter with particular immunities. It is related, that, when he was at ſchool, he ſeldom mingled in play with the other boys, but retired to his chamber; where his ſovereign pleaſure was to ſit, hour after hour, while his hair was combed by ſomebody, whoſe ſervice he found means to procure *.

At

* Iſaac Voſſius relates, that he alſo delighted in having his hair combed when he could have it done by barbers or other perſons ſkilled in the rules of proſody. Of the paſſage that contains this ridiculous fancy, the following is a tranſlation: "Many "people

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At ſchool he became acquainted with the poets ancient and modern, and fixed his attention particularly on Milton.

In 1694 he entered himſelf at Chriſt-church, a college at that time in the higheſt reputation, by the tranſmiſſion of Buſby's ſcholars to the care firſt of *Fell*, and afterwards of *Aldrich*. Here he was diſtinguiſhed as a genius eminent among the eminent, and for friendſhip particularly intimate with Mr. Smith, the author of *Phædra and Hippolytus*. The profeſſion which he intended to follow was that of Phyſick; and he took much delight in Natural Hiſtory, of which Botany was his favourite part.

His reputation was confined to his friends and to the univerſity; till about 1703 he extended it to a wider circle by the *Splendid Shilling*, which ſtruck the publick attention with a Mode of writing new and unexpected.

This performance raiſed him ſo high, that, when Europe reſounded with the victory of Blenheim, he was, probably with an occult oppoſition to Addiſon, employed to deliver the acclamation of the Tories. It is ſaid that he would willingly have declined the taſk, but that his friends urged it upon him. It

"people take delight in the rubbing of their limbs, and the "combing of their hair; but theſe exerciſes would delight much "more, if the ſervants at the baths, and of the barbers, were "ſo ſkilful in this art, that they could expreſs any meaſures with "their fingers. I remember that more than once I have fallen "into the hands of men of this ſort, who could imitate any mea-"ſure of ſongs in combing the hair, ſo as ſometimes to expreſs "very intelligibly Iambics, Trochees, Dactyls, &c. from whence "there aroſe to me no ſmall delight." See his Treatiſe de Poematum cantu & viribus Rythmi. Oxon. 1673. p. 62. H.

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appears that he wrote this poem at the house of Mr. St. John.

Blenheim was published in 1705. The next year produced his great work, the poem upon *Cider*, in two books; which was received with loud praises, and continued long to be read, as an imitation of Virgil's *Georgick*, which needed not shun the presence of the original.

He then grew probably more confident of his own abilities, and began to meditate a poem on the *Last Day*; a subject on which no mind can hope to equal expectation.

This work he did not live to finish; his diseases, a slow consumption and an asthma, put a stop to his studies, and on Feb. 15, 1708, at the beginning of his thirty-third year, put an end to his life.

He was buried in the cathedral of Hereford; and Sir *Simon Harcourt*, afterwards Lord Chancellor, gave him a monument in Westminster Abbey. The inscription at Westminster was written, as I have heard, by Dr. *Atterbury*, though commonly given to Dr. *Freind*.

His

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His Epitaph at Hereford:

JOHANNES PHILIPS

Obiit 15 die Feb. Anno { Dom. 1708. / Ætat. suæ 32.

Cujus
Ossa si requiras, hanc Urnam inspice:
Si ingenium nescias, ipsius Opera consule;
Si Tumulum desideras,
Templum adi *Westmonasteriense:*
Qualis quantusque Vir fuerit,
Dicat elegans illa & præclara,
Quæ cenotaphium ibi decorat,
Inscriptio.
Quàm interim erga Cognatos pius & officiosus,
Testetur hoc saxum
A MARIA PHILIPS Matre ipsius pientissimâ,
Dilecti Filii Memoriæ non sine Lacrymis dicatum.

His Epitaph at Westminster:

Herefordiæ conduntur Ossa,
Hoc in Delubro statuitur Imago,
Britanniam omnem pervagatur Fama,
JOHANNIS PHILIPS:
Qui Viris bonis doctisque juxta charus,
Immortale suum Ingenium,
Euriditione multiplici excultum,
Miro animi candore,
Eximiâ morum simplicitate,
Honestavit,
Litterarum Amœniorum sitim,
Quam Wintoniæ Puer sentire cœperat,
Inter Ædis Christi Alumnos jugiter explevit,
In illo Musarum Domicilio
Præclaris Æmulorum studiis excitatus,
Optimis scribendi Magistris semper intentus,
Carmina sermone Patrio composuit

A Græcis

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A Græcis Latinisque fontibus feliciter deducta,
Atticis Romanisque auribus omnino digna,
Versuum quippe Harmoniam
Rythmo didicerat.
Antiquo illo, libero, multiformi
Ad res ipsas apto prorsus, & attemperato,
Non numeris in eundem ferè orbem redeuntibus,
Non Clausularum similiter cadentium sono
Metiri:
Uni in hoc laudis genere Miltono secundus,
Primoque pœne par.
Res seu Tenues, seu Grandes, seu Mediocres
Ornandas sumserat,
Nusquam, non quod decuit,
Et videt, & assecutus est,
Egregius, quocunque Stylum verteret,
Fandi author, & Modorum artifex.
Fas sit Huic,
Auso licèt à tuâ Metrorum Lege discedere,
O Poesis Anglicanæ Pater, atque Conditor, Chaucere,
Alterum tibi latus claudere,
Vatum certe Cineres, tuos undique stipantium
Non dedecebit Chorum.
SIMON HARCOURT, Miles,
Viri benè de se, de Litteris meriti
Quoad viveret Fautor,
Post Obitum piè memor,
Hoc illi Saxum poni voluit.
J. PHILIPS, STEPHANI, S. T. P. Archidiaconi
Salop. Filius, natus est Bamptoniæ
In agro Oxon. Dec. 30, 1676.
Obiit Herefordiæ, Feb. 15, 1708.

Philips has been always praised, without contradiction, as a man modest, blameless, and pious; who bore narrowness of fortune without discontent, and tedious

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tedious and painful maladies without impatience; beloved by thoſe that knew him, but not ambitious to be known. He was probably not formed for a wide circle. His converſation is commended for its innocent gaiety, which ſeems to have flowed only among his intimates, for I have been told, that he was in company ſilent and barren, and employed only upon the pleaſure of his pipe. His addiction to tobacco is mentioned by one of his biographers, who remarks that in all his writings, except *Blenheim*, he has found an opportunity of celebrating the fragrant fume. In common life he was probably one of thoſe who pleaſe by not offending, and whoſe perſon was loved becauſe his writings were admired. He died honoured and lamented, before any part of his reputation had withered, and before his patron St. John had diſgraced him.

His works are few. The *Splendid Shilling* has the uncommon merit of an original deſign, unleſs it may be thought precluded by the ancient *Centos*. To degrade the ſounding words and ſtately conſtruction of Milton, by an application to the loweſt and moſt trivial things, gratifies the mind with a momentary triumph over that grandeur which hitherto held its captives in admiration; the words and things are preſented with a new appearance, and novelty is always grateful where it gives no pain.

But the merit of ſuch performances begins and ends with the firſt author. He that ſhould again adapt Milton's phraſe to the groſs incidents of common life, and even adapt it with more art, which would not be difficult, muſt yet expect but a ſmall part of the praiſe which Philips has obtained; he can

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can only hope to be considered as the repeater of a jest.

"The parody on Milton," says Gildon, "is the "only tolerable production of its author." This is a censure too dogmatical and violent. The poem of *Blenheim* was never denied to be tolerable, even by those who do not allow it supreme excellence. It is indeed the poem of a scholar, *all inexpert of war*; of a man who writes books from books, and studies the world in a college. He seems to have formed his ideas of the field of *Blenheim* from the battles of the heroic ages, or the tales of chivalry, with very little comprehension of the qualities necessary to the composition of a modern hero, which Addison has displayed with so much propriety. He makes *Marlborough* behold at a distance the slaughter made by *Tallard*, then haste to encounter and restrain him, and mow his way through ranks made headless by his sword.

He imitates Milton's numbers indeed, but imitates them very injudiciously. Deformity is easily copied; and whatever there is in Milton which the reader wishes away, all that is obsolete, peculiar, or licentious, is accumulated with great care by Philips. Milton's verse was harmonious, in proportion to the general state of our metre in Milton's age; and, if he had written after the improvements made by Dryden, it is reasonable to believe that he would have admitted a more pleasing modulation of numbers into his work; but Philips sits down with a resolution to make no more musick than he found; to want all that his master wanted, though he is very far from having what his master had. Those asperities, there-

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therefore, that are venerable in the *Paradise Lost*, are contemptible in the *Blenheim*.

There is a Latin ode written to his patron St. John, in return for a present of wine and tobacco, which cannot be passed without notice. It is gay and elegant, and exhibits several artful accommodations of classick expressions to new purposes. It seems better turned than the ode of *Hannes* *.

To the poem on *Cider*, written in imitation of the *Georgicks*, may be given this peculiar praise, that it is grounded in truth; that the precepts which it contains are exact and just; and that it is therefore, at once, a book of entertainment and of science. This I was told by Miller, the great gardener and botanist, whose expression was, that *there were many books written on the same subject in prose, which do not contain so much truth as that poem.*

In the disposition of his matter, so as to intersperse precepts relating to the culture of trees with sentiments more generally alluring, and in easy and graceful transitions from one subject to another, he has very diligently imitated his master; but he unhappily pleased himself with blank verse, and supposed that the numbers of Milton, which impress the mind with veneration, combined as they are with subjects

* This ode I am willing to mention, because there seems to be an error in all the printed copies, which is, I find, retained in the last. They all read;

Quam Gratiarum cura decentium
O! O! labellis cui Venus insidet.

The author probably wrote,

Quam Gratiarum cura decentium
Ornat; labellis cui Venus insidet. Dr. J

of

of inconceivable grandeur, could be ſuſtained by images which at moſt can riſe only to elegance. Contending angels may ſhake the regions of Heaven in blank verſe; but the flow of equal meaſures, and the embelliſhment of rhyme, muſt recommend to our attention the art of engrafting, and decide the merit of the *redſtreak* and *pearmain*.

What ſtudy could confer, Philips had obtained; but natural deficience cannot be ſupplied. He ſeems not born to greatneſs and elevation. He is never lofty, nor does he often ſurpriſe with unexpected excellence; but perhaps to his laſt poem may be applied what Tully ſaid of the work of Lucretius, that *it is written with much art, though with few blazes of genius.*

The following fragment, written by Edmund Smith, upon the works of Philips, has been tranſcribed from the Bodleian manuſcripts.

" A Prefatory Diſcourſe to the poem on Mr. Philips, with a character of his writings.

" It is altogether as equitable ſome account ſhould be given of thoſe who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their writings, as of thoſe who are renowned for great actions. It is but reaſonable they, who contribute ſo much to the immortality of others, ſhould have ſome ſhare in it themſelves; and ſince their genius only is diſcovered by their works, it is juſt that their virtues ſhould be recorded by their friends. For no modeſt men (as the perſon I write of was in perfection) will write their own panegyricks; and it is very hard that they ſhould go without reputation, only becauſe they the more deſerve it. The end of

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writing Lives is for the imitation of the readers. It will be in the power of very few to imitate the Duke of Marlborough; we muſt be content with admiring his great qualities and actions, without hopes of following them. The private and ſocial virtues are more eaſily tranſcribed. The life of Cowley is more inſtructive, as well as more fine, than any we have in our language. And it is to be wiſhed, ſince Mr. Philips had ſo many of the good qualities of that poet, that I had ſome of the abilities of his hiſtorian.

The Grecian philoſophers have had their Lives written, their morals commended, and their ſayings recorded. Mr. Philips had all the virtues to which moſt of them only pretended, and all their integrity without any of their affectation.

The French are very juſt to eminent men in this point; not a learned man nor a poet can die, but all Europe muſt be acquainted with his accompliſhments. They give praiſe and expect it in their turns: they commend their Patru's and Moliere's as well as their Condé's and Turenne's; their Pelliſon's and Racine's have their elogies, as well as the prince whom they celebrate; and their poems, their mercuries, and orations, nay their very gazettes, are filled with the praiſes of the learned.

I am ſatisfied, had they a Philips among them, and known how to value him; had they one of his learning, his temper, but above all of that particular turn of humour, that altogether new genius, he had been an example to their poets, and a ſubject of their panegyricks, and perhaps ſet in competition with the ancients, to whom only he ought to ſubmit.

I ſhall

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I ſhall therefore endeavour to do juſtice to his memory, ſince nobody elſe undertakes it. And indeed I can aſſign no cauſe why ſo many of his acquaintance (that are as willing and more able than myſelf to give an account of him) ſhould forbear to celebrate the memory of one ſo dear to them, but only that they look upon it as a work entirely belonging to me.

I ſhall content myſelf with giving only a character of the perſon and his writings, without meddling with the tranſactions of his life, which was altogether private: I ſhall only make this known obſervation of his family, that there was ſcarcely ſo many extraordinary men in any one. I have been acquainted with five of his brothers (of which three are ſtill living), all men of fine parts, yet all of a very unlike temper and genius. So that their fruitful mother, like the mother of the gods, ſeems to have produced a numerous offſpring, all of different though uncommon faculties. Of the living, neither their modeſty, nor the humour of the preſent age, permits me to ſpeak: of the dead, I may ſay ſomething.

One of them had made the greateſt progreſs in the ſtudy of the law of nature and nations of any one I know. He had perfectly maſtered, and even improved, the notions of Grotius, and the more refined ones of Puffendorff. He could refute Hobbes with as much ſolidity as ſome of greater name, and expoſe him with as much wit as Echard. That noble ſtudy, which requires the greateſt reach of reaſon and nicety of diſtinction, was not at all difficult to him. 'Twas a national loſs to be deprived of one who underſtood a ſcience ſo neceſſary, and yet ſo

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unknown in England. I ſhall add only, he had the ſame honeſty and ſincerity as the perſon I write of; but more heat: the former was more inclined to argue, the latter to divert: one employed his reaſon more; the other his imagination: the former had been well qualified for thoſe poſts, which the modeſty of the latter made him refuſe. His other dead brother would have been an ornament to the college of which he was a member. He had a genius either for poetry or oratory; and, though very young, compoſed ſeveral very agreeable pieces. In all probability he would have written as finely as his brother did nobly. He might have been the Waller, as the other was the Milton, of his time. The one might celebrate Marlborough, the other his beautiful offſpring. This had not been ſo fit to deſcribe the actions of heroes as the virtues of private men. In a word, he had been fitter for my place; and, while his brother was writing upon the greateſt men that any age ever produced, in a ſtyle equal to them, he might have ſerved as a panegyriſt on him.

This is all I think neceſſary to ſay of his family. I ſhall proceed to himſelf and his writings; which I ſhall firſt treat of, becauſe I know they are cenſured by ſome out of envy, and more out of ignorance.

The *Splendid Shilling*, which is far the leaſt conſiderable, has the more general reputation, and perhaps hinders the character of the reſt. The ſtyle agreed ſo well with the burleſque, that the ignorant thought it could become nothing elſe. Every body is pleaſed with that work. But to judge rightly of the other requires a perfect maſtery of poetry and criticiſm, a juſt contempt of the little turns and

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witticiſms now in vogue, and, above all, a perfect underſtanding of poetical diction and deſcription.

All that have any taſte of poetry will agree, that the great burleſque is much to be preferred to the low. It is much eaſier to make a great thing appear little, than a little one great: Cotton and others of a very low genius have done the former; but Philips, Garth, and Boileau, only the latter.

A picture in miniature is every painter's talent; but a piece for a cupola, where all the figures are enlarged, yet proportioned to the eye, requires a maſter's hand.

It muſt ſtill be more acceptable than the low burleſque, becauſe the images of the latter are mean and filthy, and the language itſelf entirely unknown to all men of good breeding. The ſtyle of Billingſgate would not make a very agreeable figure at St. James's. A gentleman would take but little pleaſure in language, which he would think it hard to be accoſted in, or in reading words which he could not pronounce without bluſhing. The lofty burleſque is the more to be admired, becauſe, to write it, the author muſt be maſter of two of the moſt different talents in nature. A talent to find out and expoſe what is ridiculous, is very different from that which is to raiſe and elevate. We muſt read Virgil and Milton for the one, and Horace and Hudibras for the other. We know that the authors of excellent comedies have often failed in the grave ſtyle, and the tragedian as often in comedy. Admiration and Laughter are of ſuch oppoſite natures, that they are ſeldom created by the ſame perſon. The man of mirth is always obſerving the follies and weakneſſes, the

ſerious

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ſerious writer the virtues or crimes, of mankind; one is pleaſed with contemplating a beau, the other a hero: even from the ſame object they would draw different ideas: Achilles would appear in very different lights to Therſites and Alexander; the one would admire the courage and greatneſs of his ſoul; the other would ridicule the vanity and raſhneſs of his temper. As the ſatyriſt ſays to Hanibal:

——I, curre per Alpes,
Ut pueris placeas, & declamatio fias.

The contrariety of ſtyle to the ſubject pleaſes the more ſtrongly, becauſe it is more ſurpriſing; the expectation of the reader is pleaſantly deceived, who expects an humble ſtyle from the ſubject, or a great ſubject from the ſtyle. It pleaſes the more univerſally, becauſe it is agreeable to the taſte both of the grave and the merry; but more particularly ſo to thoſe who have a reliſh of the beſt writers, and the nobleſt ſort of poetry. I ſhall produce only one paſſage out of this poet, which is the misfortune of his Galligaſkins:

My Galligaſkins, which have long withſtood
The winter's fury and encroaching froſts,
By time ſubdued (what will not time ſubdue!)

This is admirably pathetical, and ſhews very well the viciſſitudes of ſublunary things. The reſt goes on to a prodigious height; and a man in Greenland could hardly have made a more pathetick and terrible complaint. Is it not ſurpriſing that the ſubject ſhould be ſo mean, and the verſe ſo pompous, that the leaſt things in his poetry, as in a microſcope, ſhould grow

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great and formidable to the eye; especially considering that, not understanding French, he had no model for his style? that he should have no writer to imitate, and himself be inimitable? that he should do all this before he was twenty? at an age which is usually pleased with a glare of false thoughts, little turns, and unnatural fustian? at an age, at which Cowley, Dryden, and I had almost said Virgil, were inconsiderable? So soon was his imagination at its full strength, his judgement ripe, and his humour complete.

This poem was written for his own diversion, without any design of publication. It was communicated but to *me*; but soon spread, and fell into the hands of pirates. It was put out, vilely mangled, by Ben Bragge; *and impudently said to be corrected by the author*. This grievance is now grown more epidemical; and no man now has a right to his own thoughts, or a title to his own writings. Xenophon answered the Persian, who demanded his arms, "We have "nothing now left but our arms and our valour: if "we surrender the one, how shall we make use of "the other?" Poets have nothing but their wits and their writings; and if they are plundered of the latter, I don't see what good the former can do them. To pirate, and publicly own it, to prefix their names to the works they steal, to own and avow the theft, I believe, was never yet heard of but in England. It will sound oddly to posterity, that, in a polite nation, in an enlightened age, under the direction of the most wise, most learned, and most generous encouragers of knowledge in the world, the property of a mechanick should be better secured than that of a scholar! that the poorest manual operations should be

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be more valued than the nobleſt products of the brain! that it ſhould be felony to rob a cobler of a pair of ſhoes, and no crime to deprive the beſt author of his whole ſubſiſtence! that nothing ſhould make a man a ſure title to his own writings but the ſtupidity of them! that the works of Dryden ſhould meet with leſs encouragement than thoſe of his own Flecknoe, or Blackmore! that Tillotſon and St. George, Tom Thumb and Temple, ſhould be ſet on an equal foot! This is the reaſon why this very Paper has been ſo long delayed; and, while the moſt impudent and ſcandalous libels are publickly vended by the pirates, this innocent work is forced to ſteal abroad as if it were a libel.

Our preſent writers are by theſe wretches reduced to the ſame condition Virgil was, when the centurion ſeized on his eſtate. But I don't doubt but I can fix upon the Mæcenas of the preſent age. that will retrieve them from it. But, whatever effect this piracy may have upon us, it contributed very much to the advantage of Mr. Philips: it helped him to a reputation which he neither deſired nor expected, and to the honour of being put upon a work of which he did not think himſelf capable; but the event ſhewed his modeſty. And it was reaſonable to hope, that he, who could raiſe mean ſubjects ſo high, ſhould ſtill be more elevated on greater themes; that he, that could draw ſuch noble ideas from a ſhilling, could not fail upon ſuch a ſubject as the Duke of Marlborough, *which is capable of heightening even the moſt low and trifling genius*. And, indeed, moſt of the great works which have been produced in the world have been owing leſs to the poet than the

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patron. Men of the greateſt genius are ſometimes lazy, and want a ſpur; often modeſt, and dare not venture in publick; they certainly know their faults in the worſt things; and even their beſt things they are not fond of, becauſe the idea of what they ought to be is far above what they are. This induced me to believe that Virgil deſired his works might be burnt, had not the ſame Auguſtus, that deſired him to write them, preſerved them from deſtruction. A ſcribbling beau may imagine a Poet *may* be induced to write, by the very pleaſure he finds in writing; but that is ſeldom, when people are neceſſitated to it. I have known men row, and uſe very hard labour, for diverſion, which if they had been tied to, they would have thought themſelves very unhappy.

But to return to *Blenheim*, that work ſo much admired by ſome, and cenſured by others. I have often wiſhed he had wrote it in Latin, that he might be out of the reach of the empty critick, who could have as little underſtood his meaning in that language as they do his beauties in his own.

Falſe criticks have been the plague of all ages; Milton himſelf, in a very polite court, has been compared to the rumbling of a wheel-barrow: he had been on the wrong ſide, and therefore could not be a good poet. *And this, perhaps, may be Mr. Philips's caſe.*

But I take generally the ignorance of his readers to be the occaſion of their diſlike. People that have formed their taſte upon the French writers can have no reliſh for Philips; they admire points and turns, and conſequently have no judgement of what is great and majeſtick: he muſt look little in their eyes, when he ſoars

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ſoars ſo high as to be almoſt out of their view. I cannot therefore allow any admirer of the French to be a judge of Blenheim, nor any who takes Bouhours for a complete critick. He generally judges of the ancients by the moderns, and not the moderns by the ancients; he takes thoſe paſſages of their own authors to be really ſublime which come the neareſt to it; he often calls that a noble and a great thought which is only a pretty and a fine one: and has more inſtances of the ſublime out of Ovid de Triſtibus, than he has out of all Virgil.

I ſhall allow, therefore, only thoſe to be judges of Philips, who make the ancients, and particularly Virgil, their ſtandard.

But, before I enter on this ſubject, I ſhall conſider what is particular in the ſtyle of Philips, and examine what ought to be the ſtyle of heroick poetry; and next inquire how far he is come up to that ſtyle.

His ſtyle is particular, becauſe he lays aſide rhyme, and writes in blank verſe, and uſes old words, and frequently poſtpones the adjective to the ſubſtantive, and the ſubſtantive to the verb; and leaves out little particles, *a*, and *the*; *her*, and *his*; and uſes frequent appoſitions. Now let us examine, whether theſe alterations of ſtyle be conformable to the true ſublime.

* * * * *

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WALSH.

WILLIAM WALSH, the ſon of Joſeph Walſh, Eſq. of Abberley in Worceſterſhire, was born in 1663, as appears from the account of Wood, who relates, that at the age of fifteen he became, in 1678, a gentleman commoner of Wadham College.

He left the univerſity without a degree, and purſued his ſtudies in London and at home; that he ſtudied, in whatever place, is apparent from the effect, for he became, in Mr. Dryden's opinion, *the beſt critick in the nation.*

He was not, however, merely a critick or a ſcholar, but a man of faſhion, and, as Dennis remarks, oſtentatiouſly ſplendid in his dreſs. He was likewiſe a member of parliament and a courtier, knight of the ſhire for his native county in ſeveral parliaments; in another the repreſentative of Richmond in Yorkſhire; and gentleman of the horſe to Queen Anne, under the Duke of Somerſet.

Some of his verſes ſhew him to have been a zealous friend to the Revolution; but his political ardour did not abate his reverence or kindneſs for Dryden,

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Dryden, to whom he gave a Dissertation on Virgil's Pastorals, in which, however studied, he discovers some ignorance of the laws of French versification.

In 1705, he began to correspond with Mr. Pope, in whom he discovered very early the power of poetry. Their letters are written upon the pastoral comedy of the Italians, and those pastorals which Pope was then preparing to publish.

The kindnesses which are first experienced are seldom forgotten. Pope always retained a grateful memory of Walsh's notice, and mentioned him in one of his latter pieces among those that had encouraged his juvenile studies.

——Granville the polite,
And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write.

In his Essay on Criticism he had given him more splendid praise; and, in the opinion of his learned commentator, sacrificed a little of his judgement to his gratitude.

The time of his death I have not learned. It must have happened between 1707, when he wrote to Pope; and 1711, when Pope praised him in his Essay. The epitaph makes him forty-six years old: if Wood's account be right, he died in 1709.

He is known more by his familiarity with greater men, than by any thing done or written by himself.

His works are not numerous. In prose he wrote *Eugenia, a Defence of Women*; which Dryden honoured with a Preface.

Esculapius, or the Hospital of Fools, published after his death.

A Col-

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A Collection of Letters and Poems, amorous and gallant, was publiſhed in the volumes called Dryden's Miſcellany, and ſome other occaſional pieces.

To his Poems and Letters is prefixed a very judicious preface upon Epiſtolary Compoſition and Amorous Poetry.

In his *Golden Age reſtored*, there was ſomething of humour, while the facts were recent; but it now ſtrikes no longer. In his imitation of Horace, the firſt ſtanzas are happily turned; and in all his writings there are pleaſing paſſages. He has, however, more elegance than vigour, and ſeldom riſes higher than to be pretty.

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DRYDEN.

OF the great poet whose life I am about to delineate, the curiosity which his reputation must excite will require a display more ample than can now be given. His contemporaries, however they reverenced his genius, left his life unwritten; and nothing therefore can be known beyond what casual mention and uncertain tradition have supplied.

JOHN DRYDEN was born August 9, 1631, at Aldwinkle near Oundle, the son of Erasmus Dryden of Titchmersh; who was the third son of Sir Erasmus Dryden, baronet, of Canons Ashby. All these places are in Northamptonshire; but the original stock of the family was in the county of Huntingdon.

He is reported by his last biographer, Derrick, to have inherited from his father an estate of two hundred a year, and to have been bred, as was said, an Anabaptist. For either of these particulars no authority is given. Such a fortune ought to have secured him from that poverty which seems always to have oppressed him; or, if he had wasted it, to have made him ashamed of publishing his necessities. But though

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though he had many enemies, who undoubtedly examined his life with a ſcrutiny ſufficiently malicious, I do not remember that he is ever charged with waſte of his patrimony. He was indeed ſometimes reproached for his firſt religion. I am therefore inclined to believe that Derrick's intelligence was partly true, and partly erroneous.

From Weſtminſter School, where he was inſtructed as one of the King's ſcholars by Dr. Buſby, whom he long after continued to reverence, he was in 1650 elected to one of the Weſtminſter ſcholarſhips at Cambridge *.

Of his ſchool performances has appeared only a poem on the death of Lord Haſtings, compoſed with great ambition of ſuch conceits as, notwithſtanding the reformation begun by Waller and Denham, the example of Cowley ſtill kept in reputation. Lord Haſtings died of the ſmall-pox; and his poet has made of the puſtules firſt roſebuds, and then gems; at laſt exalts them into ſtars; and ſays,

> No comet need foretell his change drew on,
> Whoſe corpſe might ſeem a conſtellation.

At the univerſity he does not appear to have been eager of poetical diſtinction, or to have laviſhed his early wit either on fictitious ſubjects or publick occaſions. He probably conſidered, that he, who propoſed to be an author, ought firſt to be a ſtudent. He obtained, whatever was the reaſon, no fellowſhip in the College. Why he was excluded cannot now be known, and it is vain to gueſs; had he thought

* He went off to Trinity College, and was admitted to a Bachelor's Degree in 1653. H.

him-

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himſelf injured, he knew how to complain. In the life of Plutarch he mentions his education in the College with gratitude; but, in a prologue at Oxford, he has theſe lines:

> Oxford to him a dearer name ſhall be
> Than his own mother-univerſity;
> Thebes did his rude, unknowing youth engage:
> He chooſes Athens in his riper age.

It was not till the death of Cromwell, in 1658, that he became a public candidate for fame, by publiſhing *Heroic Stanzas on the late Lord Protector*; which, compared with the verſes of Sprat and Waller on the ſame occaſion, were ſufficient to raiſe great expectations of the riſing poet.

When the King was reſtored, Dryden, like the other panegyriſts of uſurpation, changed his opinion, or his profeſſion, and publiſhed ASTREA REDUX *a poem on the happy Reſtoration and Return of his moſt ſacred Majeſty King Charles the Second.*

The reproach of inconſtancy was, on this occaſion, ſhared with ſuch numbers, that it produced neither hatred nor diſgrace! if he changed, he changed with the nation. It was, however, not totally forgotten when his reputation raiſed him enemies.

The ſame year, he praiſed the new King in a ſecond poem on his reſtoration. In the ASTREA was the line,

> An horrid *ſtillneſs* firſt *invades* the *ear*,
> And in that ſilence we a tempeſt fear—

for which he was perſecuted with perpetual ridicule, perhaps with more than was deſerved. *Silence* is indeed mere privation; and, ſo conſidered, cannot *invade*;

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invade; but privation likewiſe certainly is *darkneſs*, and probably *cold*; yet poetry has never been refuſed the right of aſcribing effects or agency to them as to poſitive powers. No man ſcruples to ſay that *darkneſs* hinders him from his work; or that *cold* has killed the plants. Death is alſo privation; yet who has made any difficulty of aſſigning to Death a dart and the power of ſtriking?

In ſettling the order of his works there is ſome difficulty; for, even when they are important enough to be formally offered to a patron, he does not commonly date his dedication; the time of writing and publiſhing is not always the ſame; nor can the firſt editions be eaſily found, if even from them could be obtained the neceſſary information.

The time at which his firſt play was exhibited is not certainly known, becauſe it was not printed till it was, ſome years afterwards, altered and revived; but ſince the plays are ſaid to be printed in the order in which they were written, from the dates of ſome, thoſe of others may be inferred; and thus it may be collected, that in 1663, in the thirty-ſecond year of his life, he commenced a writer for the ſtage; compelled undoubtedly by neceſſity, for he appears never to have loved that exerciſe of his genius, or to have much pleaſed himſelf with his own dramas.

Of the ſtage, when he had once invaded it, he kept poſſeſſion for many years; not indeed without the competition of rivals who ſometimes prevailed, or the cenſure of criticks, which was often poignant and often juſt; but with ſuch a degree of reputation as made him at leaſt ſecure of being heard, whatever might be the final determination of the publick.

His

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His first piece was a comedy called the *Wild Gallant*. He began with no happy auguries; for his performance was so much disapproved, that he was compelled to recall it, and change it from its imperfect state to the form in which it now appears, and which is yet sufficiently defective to vindicate the criticks.

I wish that there were no necessity of following the progress of his theatrical fame, or tracing the meanders of his mind through the whole series of his dramatick performances; it will be fit, however, to enumerate them, and to take especial notice of those that are distinguished by any peculiarity, intrinsick or concomitant; for the composition and fate of eight-and-twenty dramas include too much of a poetical life to be omitted.

In 1664, he published the *Rival Ladies*, which he dedicated to the Earl of Orrery, a man of high reputation both as a writer and as a statesman. In this play he made his essay of dramatick rhyme, which he defends, in his dedication, with sufficient certainty of a favourable hearing; for Orrery was himself a writer of rhyming tragedies.

He then joined with Sir Robert Howard in the *Indian Queen*, a tragedy in rhyme. The parts which either of them wrote are not distinguished.

The *Indian Emperor* was published in 1667. It is a tragedy in rhyme, intended for a sequel to *Howard's Indian Queen*. Of this connection notice was given to the audience by printed bills, distributed at the door; an expedient supposed to be ridiculed in the *Rehearsal*, when Bayes tells how many reams

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reams he has printed, to inſtill into the audience ſome conception of his plot.

In this play is the deſcription of Night, which Rymer has made famous by preferring it to thoſe of all other poets.

The practice of making tragedies in rhyme was introduced ſoon after the Reſtoration, as it ſeems by the Earl of Orrery, in compliance with the opinion of Charles the Second, who had formed his taſte by the French theatre; and Dryden, who wrote, and made no difficulty of declaring that he wrote only to pleaſe, and who perhaps knew that by his dexterity of verſification he was more likely to excel others in rhyme than without it, very readily adopted his maſter's preference. He therefore made rhyming tragedies, till, by the prevalence of manifeſt propriety, he ſeems to have grown aſhamed of making them any longer.

To this play is prefixed a very vehement defence of dramatic rhyme, in confutation of the preface to the *Duke of Lerma*, in which Sir Robert Howard had cenſured it.

In 1667 he publiſhed *Annus Mirabilis*, the *Year of Wonders*, which may be eſteemed one of his moſt elaborate works.

It is addreſſed to Sir Robert Howard by a letter, which is not properly a dedication; and, writing to a poet, he has interſperſed many critical obſervations, of which ſome are common, and ſome perhaps ventured without much conſideration. He began, even now, to exerciſe the domination of conſcious genius, by recommending his own performance: "I am ſa-
"tisfied that as the Prince and General [Rupert and

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"Monk] are incomparably the beſt ſubjects I ever "had, ſo what I have written on them is much bet- "ter than what I have performed on any other. As "I have endeavoured to adorn my poem with noble "thoughts, ſo much more to expreſs thoſe thoughts "with elocution."

It is written in quatrains, or heroic ſtanzas of four lines; a meaſure which he had learned from the *Gondibert* of Davenant, and which he then thought the moſt majeſtick that the Engliſh language affords. Of this ſtanza he mentions the incumbrances, encreaſed as they were by the exactneſs which the age required. It was, throughout his life, very much his cuſtom to recommend his works by repreſentation of the difficulties that he had encountered, without appearing to have ſufficiently conſidered, that where there is no difficulty there is no praiſe.

There ſeems to be, in the conduct of Sir Robert Howard and Dryden towards each other, ſomething that is not now eaſily to be explained. Dryden, in his dedication to the Earl of Orrery, had defended dramatick rhyme; and Howard, in the preface to a collection of plays, had cenſured his opinion. Dryden vindicated himſelf in his *Dialogue on Dramatick Poetry:* Howard, in his preface to the *Duke of Lerma*, animadverted on the Vindication; and Dryden, in a preface to the *Indian Emperor*, replied to the Animadverſions with great aſperity, and almoſt with contumely. The dedication to this play is dated the year in which the *Annus Mirabilis* was publiſhed. Here appears a ſtrange inconſiſtency; but Langbaine affords ſome help, by relating that the anſwer to Howard was not publiſhed in the firſt edition of the

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play, but was added when it was afterwards reprinted; and as the *Duke of Lerma* did not appear till 1668, the ſame year in which the dialogue was publiſhed, there was time enough for enmity to grow up between authors, who, writing both for the theatre, were naturally rivals.

He was now ſo much diſtinguiſhed, that in 1668 he ſucceeded Sir William Davenant as poet-laureat. The ſalary of the laureat had been raiſed in favour of Jonſon, by Charles the Firſt, from an hundred marks to one hundred pounds a year, and a tierce of wine; a revenue in thoſe days not inadequate to the conveniences of life.

The ſame year, he publiſhed his eſſay on Dramatick Poetry, an elegant and inſtructive dialogue, in which we are told, by Prior, that the principal character is meant to repreſent the Duke of Dorſet. This work ſeems to have given Addiſon a model for his Dialogues upon Medals.

Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen (1668), is a tragicomedy. In the preface he diſcuſſes a curious queſtion, whether a poet can judge well of his own productions? and determines very juſtly, that, of the plan and diſpoſition, and all that can be reduced to principles of ſcience, the author may depend upon his own opinion; but that, in thoſe parts where fancy predominates, ſelf-love may eaſily deceive. He might have obſerved, that what is good only becauſe it pleaſes, cannot be pronounced good till it has been found to pleaſe.

Sir Martin Marr-all (1668) is a comedy, publiſhed without preface or dedication, and at firſt without the name of the author. Langbaine charges it, like

moſt

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moſt of the reſt, with plagiariſm; and obſerves, that the ſong is tranſlated from Voiture, allowing however that both the ſenſe and meaſure are exactly obſerved.

The Tempeſt (1670) is an alteration of Shakſpeare's play, made by Dryden in conjunction with Davenant; "whom," ſays he, "I found of ſo quick a "fancy, that nothing was propoſed to him in which "he could not ſuddenly produce a thought ex- "tremely pleaſant and ſurpriſing; and thoſe firſt "thoughts of his, contrary to the Latin proverb, "were not always the leaſt happy; and as his fancy "was quick, ſo likewiſe were the products of it re- "mote and new. He borrowed not of any other; "and his imaginations were ſuch as could not eaſily "enter into any other man."

The effect produced by the conjunction of theſe two powerful minds was, that to Shakſpeare's monſter, Caliban, is added a ſiſter-monſter, Sycorax; and a woman, who, in the original play, had never ſeen a man, is in this brought acquainted with a man that had never ſeen a woman.

About this time, in 1673, Dryden ſeems to have had his quiet much diſturbed by the ſucceſs of the *Empreſs of Morocco*, a tragedy written in rhyme by *Elkanah Settle*; which was ſo much applauded, as to make him think his ſupremacy of reputation in ſome danger. Settle had not only been proſperous on the ſtage, but, in the confidence of ſucceſs, had publiſhed his play, with ſculptures and a preface of defiance. Here was one offence added to another; and, for the laſt blaſt of inflammation, it was acted at Whitehall by the court-ladies.

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Dryden could not now repreſs thoſe emotions, which he called indignation, and others jealouſy; but wrote upon the play and the dedication ſuch criticiſm as malignant impatience could pour out in haſte.

Of Settle he gives this character: "He 's an animal of a moſt deplored underſtanding, without reading and converſation. His being is in a twilight of ſenſe, and ſome glimmering of thought which he can never faſhion into wit or Engliſh. His ſtyle is boiſterous and rough-hewn, his rhyme incorrigibly lewd, and his numbers perpetually harſh and ill-ſounding. The little talent which he has, is fancy. He ſometimes labours with a thought; but, with the pudder he makes to bring it into the world, 'tis commonly ſtill-born; ſo that, for want of learning and elocution, he will never be able to expreſs any thing either naturally or juſtly."

This is not very decent; yet this is one of the pages in which criticiſm prevails over brutal fury. He proceeds: "He has a heavy hand at fools, and a great felicity in writing nonſenſe for them. Fools they will be in ſpite of him. His King, his two Empreſſes, his Villain, and his Sub-villain, nay his Hero, have all a certain natural caſt of the father—their folly was born and bred in them, and ſomething of the Elkanah will be viſible."

This is Dryden's general declamation; I will not withhold from the reader a particular remark. Having gone through the firſt act, he ſays, "To conclude this act with the moſt rumbling piece of nonſenſe ſpoken yet:

"To flattering lightning our feign'd ſmiles conform,
"Which, back'd with thunder, do but gild a ſtorm.

"Con-

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"*Conform a ſmile to lightning*, make a *ſmile* imitate "*lightning*, and *flattering lightning*: lightning ſure is "a threatening thing. And this lightning muſt *gild* "*a ſtorm*. Now, if I muſt conform by ſmiles to "lightning, then my ſmiles muſt gild a ſtorm too: "to *gild* with *ſmiles*, is a new invention of gilding. "And gild a ſtorm by being *backed with thunder*. "Thunder is part of the ſtorm; ſo one part of the "ſtorm muſt help to *gild* another part, and help by "*backing*; as if a man would gild a thing the better "for being backed, or having a load upon his back. "So that here is *gilding* by *conforming*, *ſmiling*, *light-* "*ning*, *backing*, and *thundering*. The whole is as if I "ſhould ſay thus: I will make my counterfeit ſmiles "look like a flattering ſtone-horſe, which, being "backed with a trooper, does but gild the battle. "I am miſtaken if nonſenſe is not here pretty thick "ſown. Sure the poet writ theſe two lines a-board "ſome ſmack in a ſtorm, and, being ſea-ſick, ſpewed "up a good lump of clotted nonſenſe at once."

Here is perhaps a ſufficient ſpecimen; but as the pamphlet, though Dryden's, has never been thought worthy of republication, and is not eaſily to be found, it may gratify curioſity to quote it more largely:

—Whene'er ſhe bleeds,
He no ſeverer a damnation needs,
That dares pronounce the ſentence of her death,
Than the infection that attends that breath.

"*That attends that breath*.——The poet is at *breath* "again; *breath* can never 'ſcape him; and here he "brings in a *breath* that muſt be *infectious* with *pro-*

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" *nouncing* a ſentence; and this ſentence is not to be " pronounced till the condemned party *bleeds*; that " is, ſhe muſt be executed firſt, and ſentenced af- " ter; and the *pronouncing* of this *ſentence* will be " infectious; that is, others will catch the diſeaſe of " that ſentence, and this infecting of others will " torment a man's ſelf. The whole is thus; *when* " *ſhe bleeds, thou needeſt no greater hell or torment to* " *thyſelf, than infecting of others by pronouncing a ſen-* " *tence upon her.* What hodge-podge does he make " here! Never was Dutch grout ſuch clogging, " thick, indigeſtible ſtuff. But this is but a taſte to " ſtay the ſtomach; we ſhall have a more plentiful " meſs preſently.

" Now to diſh up the poet's broth, that I pro- " miſed:

For when we 're dead, and our freed ſouls enlarg'd,
Of nature's groſſer burden we 're diſcharg'd,
Then, gentle as a happy lover's ſigh,
Like wand'ring metors through the air we 'll fly,
And in our airy walk, as ſubtle gueſts,
We 'll ſteal into our cruel fathers' breaſts,
There read their ſouls, and track each paſſion's ſphere,
See how Revenge moves there, Ambition here;
And in their orbs view the dark characters
Of ſieges, ruins, murders, blood, and wars.
We'll blot out all thoſe hideous draughts, and write
Pure and white forms; then with a radiant light
Their breaſts encircle, till their paſſions be
Gentle as nature in its infancy;
Till, ſoften'd by our charms, their furies ceaſe,
And their revenge reſolves into a peace.
Thus by our death their quarrel ends,
Whom living we made foes, dead we 'll make friends.

" If

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"If this be not a very liberal mess, I will refer my-
"self to the stomach of any moderate guest. And
"a rare mess it is, far excelling any Westminster
"white-broth. It is a kind of gibblet porridge,
"made of the gibblets of a couple of young geese,
"stodged full of *meteors, orbs, spheres, track, hi-*
"*deous draughts, dark characters, white forms,* and
"*radiant lights,* designed not only to please appe-
"tite, and indulge luxury, but it is also physical,
"being an approved medicine to purge choler; for
"it is propounded, by Morena, as a receipt to cure
"their fathers of their choleric humours; and,
"were it written in characters as barbarous as the
"words, might very well pass for a doctor's bill.
"To conclude: it is porridge, 'tis a receipt, 'tis a
"pig with a pudding in the belly, 'tis I know not
"what: for, certainly, never any one that pretend-
"ed to write sense had the impudence before to put
"such stuff as this into the mouths of those that
"were to speak it before an audience, whom he did
"not take to be all fools; and after that to print it
"too, and expose it to the examination of the world.
"But let us see what we can make of this stuff:

For when we're dead, and our freed souls enlarg'd——

"Here he tells us what it is to be *dead*; it is to have
"*our freed souls set free.* Now, if to have a soul set
"free, is to be dead; then to have a *freed soul* set
"free, is to have a dead man die.

Then, gently as a happy lover's sigh——

"They two like one *sigh*, and that one *sigh* like two
"wandering meteors,

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"—Shall fly through the air—

"That is, they ſhall mount above like falling ſtars, "or elſe they ſhall ſkip like two jacks with lanthorns, "or Will with a whiſp, and Madge with a candle."

And in their airy walk ſteal into their cruel fathers' breaſts, like ſubtle gueſts. So "that their *fathers'* "*breaſts* muſt be in an *airy walk*, an airy *walk* of a "*flier. And there they will read their ſouls, and track* "*the ſpheres of their paſſions.* That is, theſe walking "fliers, Jack with a lanthorn, &c. will put on his "ſpectacles, and fall a *reading ſouls*, and put on his "pumps and fall a *tracking of ſpheres:* ſo that he "will read and run, walk and fly, at the ſame time! "Oh! Nimble Jack! *Then he will ſee, how revenge* "*here, how ambition there*——The birds will hop "about. *And then view the dark characters of ſieges,* "*ruins, murders, blood, and wars, in their orbs: Track* "*the characters* to their forms! Oh! rare ſport for "Jack! Never was place ſo full of game as theſe "breaſts! You cannot ſtir, but fluſh a ſphere, ſtart "a character, or unkennel an orb!"

Settle's is ſaid to have been the firſt play embelliſhed with ſculptures; thoſe ornaments ſeem to have given poor Dryden great diſturbance. He tries however to eaſe his pain by venting his malice in a parody.

"The poet has not only been ſo imprudent to "expoſe all this ſtuff, but ſo arrogant to defend it "with an epiſtle; like a ſaucy booth-keeper, that, "when he had put a cheat upon the people, would "wrangle and fight with any that would not like "it, or would offer to diſcover it; for which arro-

"gance

"gance our poet receives this correction: and, to "jerk him a little the ſharper, I will not tranſpoſe "his verſe, but by the help of his own words "tranſnonſenſe ſenſe, that, by my ſtuff, people may "judge the better what his is:

"Great Boy, thy tragedy and ſculptures done,
"From preſs and plates, in fleets do homeward run;
"And, in ridiculous and humble pride,
"Their courſe in ballad-ſingers' baſkets guide,
"Whoſe greaſy twigs do all new beauties take,
"From the gay ſhews thy dainty ſculptures make.
"Thy lines a meſs of rhyming nonſenſe yield,
"A ſenſeleſs tale, with flattering fuſtian fill'd.
"No grain of ſenſe does in one line appear,
"Thy words big bulks of boiſterous bombaſt bear.
"With noiſe they move, and from players' mouths re-
"bound,
"When their tongues dance to thy words' empty ſound,
"By thee inſpir'd the rumbling verſes roll,
"As if that rhyme and bombaſt lent a ſoul;
"And with that ſoul they ſeem taught duty too;
"To huffing words does humble nonſenſe bow,
"As if it would thy worthleſs worth enhance,
"To th' loweſt rank of fops thy praiſe advance,
"To whom, by inſtinct, all thy ſtuff is dear:
"Their loud claps echo to the theatre.
"From breaths of fools thy commendation ſpreads,
"Fame ſings thy praiſe with mouths of logger-heads.
"With noiſe and laughing each thy fuſtain greets,
"'Tis clapt by choirs of empty-headed cits,
"Who have their tribute ſent, and homage given,
"As men in whiſpers ſend loud noiſe to Heaven.

"Thus I have daubed him with his own puddle: "and now we are come from aboard his dancing, "maſk-

"maſking, rebounding, breathing fleet: and, as if "we had landed at Gotham, we meet nothing but "fools and nonſenſe."

Such was the criticiſm to which the genius of Dryden could be reduced, between rage and terrour; rage with little provocation, and terrour with little danger. To ſee the higheſt mind thus levelled with the meaneſt, may produce ſome ſolace to the conſciouſneſs of weakneſs, and ſome mortification to the pride of wiſdom. But let it be remembered, that minds are not levelled in their powers but when they are firſt levelled in their deſires. Dryden and Settle had both placed their happineſs in the claps of multitudes.

An Evening's Love, or the *Mock Aſtrologer*, a comedy (1671), is dedicated to the illuſtrious Duke of Newcaſtle, whom he courts by adding to his praiſes thoſe of his lady, not only as a lover but a partner of his ſtudies. It is unpleaſing to think how many names, once celebrated, are ſince forgotten. Of Newcaſtle's works nothing is now known but his Treatiſe on Horſemanſhip.

The Preface ſeems very elaborately written, and contains many juſt remarks on the Fathers of the Engliſh drama. Shakſpeare's plots, he ſays, are in the hundred novels of *Cinthio*; thoſe of Beaumont and Fletcher in Spaniſh Stories; Jonſon only made them for himſelf. His criticiſms upon tragedy, comedy, and farce, are judicious and profound. He endeavours to defend the immorality of ſome of his comedies by the example of former writers; which is only to ſay, that he was not the firſt nor perhaps the greateſt

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greateſt offender. Againſt thoſe that accuſed him of plagiariſm he alleges a favourable expreſſion of the king: "He only deſired that they, who accuſe me "of thefts, would ſteal him plays like mine;" and then relates how much labour he ſpends in fitting for the Engliſh ſtage what he borrows from others.

Tyrannick Love, or the Virgin Martyr (1672), was another tragedy in rhyme, conſpicuous for many paſſages of ſtrength and elegance, and many of empty noiſe and ridiculous turbulence. The rants of Maximin have been always the ſport of criticiſm; and were at length, if his own confeſſion may be truſted, the ſhame of the writer.

Of this play he has taken care to let the reader know, that it was contrived and written in ſeven weeks. Want of time was often his excuſe, or perhaps ſhortneſs of time was his private boaſt in the form of an apology.

It was written before the *Conqueſt of Granada*, but publiſhed after it. The deſign is to recommend piety. "I conſidered that pleaſure was not the only "end of Poeſy; and that even the inſtructions of "morality were not ſo wholly the buſineſs of a poet, "as that the precepts and examples of piety were to "be omitted; for to leave that employment altogether to the clergy, were to forget that religion "was firſt taught in verſe, which the lazineſs or dullneſs of ſucceeding prieſthood turned afterwards "into proſe." Thus fooliſhly could Dryden write, rather than not ſhew his malice to the parſons.

The

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The two parts of the *Conquest of Granada* (1672), are written with a seeming determination to glut the publick with dramatick wonders, to exhibit in its highest elevation a theatrical meteor of incredible love and impossible valour, and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of posterity. All the rays of romantick heat, whether amorous or warlike, glow in Almanzor by a kind of concentration. He is above all laws; he is exempt from all restraints; he ranges the world at will, and governs wherever he appears. He fights without enquiring the cause, and loves in spight of the obligations of justice, of rejection by his mistress, and of prohibition from the dead. Yet the scenes are, for the most part, delightful; they exhibit a kind of illustrious depravity, and majestick madness, such as, if it is sometimes despised, is often reverenced, and in which the ridiculous is mingled with the astonishing.

In the Epilogue to the second part of the *Conquest of Granada*, Dryden indulges his favourite pleasure of discrediting his predecessors; and this Epilogue he has defended by a long postscript. He had promised a second dialogue, in which he should more fully treat of the virtues and faults of the English poets, who have written in the dramatick, epick, or lyrick way. This promise was never formally performed; but, with respect to the dramatick writers, he has given us in his prefaces, and in this postscript, something equivalent; but his purpose being to exalt himself by the comparison, he shews faults distinctly, and only praises excellence in general terms.

A play

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A play thus written, in professed defiance of probability, naturally drew upon itself the vultures of the theatre. One of the criticks that attacked it was *Martin Clifford*, to whom Sprat addressed the Life of Cowley, with such veneration of his critical powers as might naturally excite great expectations of instructions from his remarks. But let honest credulity beware of receiving characters from contemporary writers. Clifford's remarks, by the favour of Dr. *Percy*, were at last obtained; and, that no man may ever want them more, I will extract enough to satisfy all reasonable desire.

In the first Letter his observation is only general: "You do live," says he, "in as much ignorance "and darkness as you did in the womb; your wri-"tings are like a Jack-of-all-trade's shop; they have "a variety, but nothing of value; and if thou art "not the dullest plant-animal that ever the earth "produced, all that I have conversed with are "strangely mistaken in thee."

In the second he tells him that Almanzor is not more copied from Achilles than from Ancient Pistol. "But I am," says he, "strangely mistaken if I "have not seen this very *Almanzor* of yours in some "disguise about this town, and passing under an-"other name. Pr'ythee tell me true, was not this "Huffcap once the *Indian Emperor?* and at another "time did he not call himself *Maximin?* Was not "*Lyndaraxa* once called *Almeria?* I mean under "*Montezuma* the Indian Emperor. I protest and "vow they are either the same, or so alike, that I "cannot, for my heart, distinguish one from the "other. You are therefore a strange unconscionable "thief;

"thief; thou art not content to ſteal from others,
"but doſt rob thy poor wretched ſelf too."

Now was *Settle's* time to take his revenge. He wrote a vindication of his own lines; and, if he is forced to yield any thing, makes his repriſals upon his enemy. To ſay that his anſwer is equal to the cenſure, is no high commendation. To expoſe Dryden's method of analyſing his expreſſions, he tries the ſame experiment upon the ſame deſcription of the ſhips in the *Indian Emperor*, of which however he does not deny the excellence; but intends to ſhew, that by ſtudied miſconſtruction every thing may be equally repreſented as ridiculous. After ſo much of Dryden's elegant animadverſions, juſtice requires that ſomething of Settle's ſhould be exhibited. The following obſervations are therefore extracted from a quarto pamphlet of ninety-five pages:

"Fate after him below with pain did move,
"And victory could ſcarce keep pace above.

"Theſe two lines, if he can ſhew me any ſenſe or
"thought in, or any thing but bombaſt and noiſe,
"he ſhall make me believe every word in his obſer-
"vations on *Morocco* ſenſe.

"In the *Empreſs of Morocco* were theſe lines:

"I'll travel then to ſome remoter ſphere,
"Till I find out new worlds, and crown you there."

On which Dryden made this remark:

"I believe our learned author takes a ſphere for a
"country; the ſphere of Morocco; as if Morocco
"were the globe of earth and water; but a globe is
"no ſphere neither, by his leave," &c. "So *ſphere*

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"muſt not be ſenſe, unleſs it relates to a circular "motion about a globe, in which ſenſe the aſtrono-"mers uſe it. I would deſire him to expound thoſe "lines in *Granada:*

"I'll to the turrets of the palace go,
"And add new fire to thoſe that fight below.'
"Thence, Hero-like, with torches by my ſide,
"(Far be the omen tho') my Love I'll guide.
"No, like his better fortune I'll appear,
"With open arms, looſe veil, and flowing hair,
"Juſt flying forward from my rowling ſphere.

"I wonder, if he be ſo ſtrict, how he dares make "ſo bold with *ſphere* himſelf, and be ſo critical in "other men's writings. Fortune is fancied ſtanding "on a globe, not on a *ſphere*, as he told us in the "firſt act.

"Becauſe *Elkanah's Similes are the moſt unlike things "to what they are compared in the world*, I'll venture "to ſtart a ſimile in his *Annus Mirabilis:* he gives "this poetical deſcription of the ſhip called the "*London:*

"The goodly London in her gallant trim,
"The Phœnix-daughter of the vanquiſht old,
"Like a rich bride does on the ocean ſwim,
"And on her ſhadow rides in floating gold.
"Her flag aloft ſpread ruffling in the wind,
"And ſanguine ſtreamers ſeem'd the flood to fire:
"The weaver, charm'd with what his loom deſign'd,
"Goes on to ſea, and knows not to retire.
"With roomy decks her guns of mighty ſtrength
"Whoſe low-laid mouths each mounting billow "laves,
"Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,
"She ſeems a ſea-waſp flying in the waves.

"What

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" What a wonderful pother is here, to make all these " poetical beautifications of a ship; that is, a *phe-* " *nix* in the first stanza, and but a *wasp* in the last; " nay, to make his humble comparison of a *wasp* " more ridiculous, he does not say it flies upon the " waves as nimbly as a wasp, or the like, but it " seemed a *wasp*. But our author at the writing of " this was not in his altitudes, to compare ships to " floating palaces: a comparison to the purpose, was " a perfection he did not arrive to till the *Indian* " *Emperor's* days. But perhaps his similitude has " more in it than we imagine; this ship had a great " many guns in her, and they, put all together, " made the sting in the wasp's tail: for this is all the " reason I can guess, why it seem'd a *wasp*. But, " because we will allow him all we can to help out, " let it be a *phenix sea-wasp*, and the rarity of such " an animal may do much towards heightening the " fancy.

" It had been much more to his purpose, if " he had designed to render the senseless play " little, to have searched for some such pedantry " as this:

" Two ifs scarce make one possibility.
" If justice will take all, and nothing give,
" Justice, methinks, is not distributive.
" To die or kill you is the alternative.
" Rather than take your life, I will not live.

" Observe how prettily our author chops logick " in heroic verse. Three such fustian canting words " as *distributive*, *alternative*, and *two ifs*, no man " but himself would have come within the noise of.

" But

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"But he's a man of general learning, and all comes "into his play.

"'Twould have done well too if he could have "met with the rant or two, worth the obſervation: "ſuch as,

"Move ſwiftly, Sun, and fly a lover's pace,
"Leave months and weeks behind thee in thy race.

"But ſurely the Sun, whether he flies a lover's "or not a lover's pace, leaves weeks and months, "nay years too, behind him in his race.

"Poor Robin, or any other of the Philo-mathe-"maticks, would have given him ſatisfaction in the "point.

"If I could kill thee now, thy fate's ſo low,
"That I muſt ſtoop, ere I can give the blow.
"But mine is fixt ſo far above thy crown,
"That all thy men,
"Piled on thy back, can never pull it down.

"Now where that is, Almanzor's fate is fixt, I "cannot gueſs: but, wherever it is, I believe Al-"manzor, and think that all Abdalla's ſubjects, "piled upon one another, might not pull down his "fate ſo well as without piling: beſides, I think "Abdalla ſo wiſe a man, that, if Almanzor had "told him piling his men upon his back might do "the feat, he would ſcarcely bear ſuch a weight, "for the pleaſure of the exploit; but it is a huff, "and let Abdalla do it if he dare.

"The people like a headlong torrent go,
"And every dam they break or overflow.

" But, unoppos'd, they either lose their force,
" Or wind in volumes to their former course:

" a very pretty allusion, contrary to all sense or rea-
" son. Torrents, I take it, let them wind never so
" much, can never return to their former course,
" unless he can suppose that fountains can go up-
" wards, which is impossible; nay more, in the fore-
" going page he tells us so too; a trick of a very
" unfaithful memory.

" But can no more than fountains upward flow;

" which of a *torrent*, which signifies a rapid stream,
" is much more impossible. Besides, if he goes to
" quibble, and say that it is impossible by art water
" may be made return, and the same water run twice
" in one and the same channel; then he quite con-
" futes what he says: for it is by being opposed,
" that it runs into its former course; for all engines
" that make water so return, do it by compulsion
" and opposition. Or, if he means a headlong tor-
" rent for a tide, which would be ridiculous, yet
" they do not wind in volumes, but come fore-right
" back (if their upright lies straight to their former
" course), and that by opposition of the sea-water,
" that drives them back again.

" And for fancy, when he lights of any thing
" like it, 'tis a wonder if it be not borrowed. As
" here, for example of, I find this fanciful thought
" in his *Ann. Mirab.*

" Old father Thames rais'd up his reverend head:
" But fear'd the fate of Simoeis would return;

" Deep

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"Deep in his ooze he sought his sedgy bed;
"And shrunk his waters back into his urn.

"This is stolen from Cowley's *Davideis*, p. 9.

"Swift Jordan started, and strait backward fled,
"Hiding amongst thick reeds his aged head.
"And when the Spaniards their assault begin,
"At once beat those without and those within.

"This Almanzor speaks of himself; and sure for "one man to conquer an army within the city, and "another without the city, at once, is something "difficult: but this slight is pardonable to some we "meet with in *Granada*: Osmin, speaking of Al-"manzor,

"Who, like a tempest that outrides the wind,
"Made a just battle, ere the bodies join'd.

"Pray, what does this honourable person mean by a "*tempest that outrides the wind!* a tempest that out-"rides itself. To suppose a tempest without wind, "is as bad as supposing a man to walk without feet; "for if he supposes the tempest to be something "distinct from the wind, yet, as being the effect "of wind only, to come before the cause is a little "preposterous; so that, if he takes it one way, or "if he takes it the other, those two *ifs* will scarcely "make one *possibility*." Enough of Settle.

Marriage-à-la-mode (1673) is a comedy dedicated to the Earl of Rochester; whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry, but the promoter of his fortune. Langbaine places this play in 1673. The Earl of Rochester, therefore, was the famous Wilmot, whom yet tradition always

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represents as an enemy to Dryden, and who is mentioned by him with some disrespect in the preface to Juvenal.

The Assignation, or Love in a Nunnery, a comedy (1673), was driven off the stage, *against the opinion*, as the author says, *of the best judges*. It is dedicated, in a very elegant address, to Sir Charles Sedley; in which he finds an opportunity for his usual complaint of hard treatment and unreasonable censure.

Amboyna (1673) is a tissue of mingled dialogue in verse and prose, and was perhaps written in less time than *The Virgin Martyr*; though the author thought not fit either ostentatiously or mournfully to tell how little labour it cost him, or at how short a warning he produced it. It was a temporary performance, written in the time of the Dutch war, to inflame the nation against their enemies; to whom he hopes, as he declares in his Epilogue, to make his poetry not less destructive than that by which Tyrtæus of old animated the Spartans. This play was written in the second Dutch war, in 1673.

Troilus and Cressida (1679) is a play altered from Shakspeare; but so altered, that, even in Langbaine's opinion, "the last scene in the third act is a mas-"ter-piece." It is introduced by a discourse on "the Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy," to which I suspect that Rymer's book had given occasion.

The *Spanish Fryar* (1681) is a tragi-comedy, eminent for the happy coincidence and coalition of the two plots. As it was written against the Papists, it would naturally at that time have friends and enemies;

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mies; and partly by the popularity which it obtained at first, and partly by the real power both of the serious and risible part, it continued long a favourite of the publick.

It was Dryden's opinion, at least for some time, and he maintains it in the dedication of this play, that the drama required an alternation of comick and tragick scenes; and that it is necessary to mitigate by alleviations of merriment the pressure of ponderous events, and the fatigue of toilsome passions. "Whoever," says he, "cannot perform "both parts, *is but half a writer for the stage.*"

The *Duke of Guise*, a tragedy (1683), written in conjunction with Lee, as *Oedipus* had been before, seems to deserve notice only for the offence which it gave to the remnant of the Covenanters, and in general to the enemies of the court, who attacked him with great violence, and were answered by him; though at last he seems to withdraw from the conflict, by transferring the greater part of the blame or merit to his partner. It happened that a contract had been made between them, by which they were to join in writing a play: and "he happened," says Dryden, "to claim the promise just upon the finish-"ing of a poem, when I would have been glad of a "little respite.—*Two*-thirds of it belonged to him; "and to me only the first scene of the play, the "whole fourth act, and the first half, or somewhat "more, of the fifth."

This was a play written professedly for the party of the Duke of York, whose succession was then opposed. A parallel is intended between the Leaguers

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of France and the Covenanters of England: and this intention produced the controverſy.

Albion and Albanius (1685) is a muſical drama or opera, written, like the *Duke of Guiſe*, againſt the Republicans. With what ſucceſs it was performed, I have not found *.

The State of Innocence and Fall of Man (1675) is termed by him an opera: it is rather a tragedy in heroick rhyme, but of which the perſonages are ſuch as cannot decently be exhibited on the ſtage. Some ſuch production was foreſeen by Marvel, who writes thus to Milon:

"Or if a work ſo infinite be ſpann'd,
"Jealous I was leſt ſome leſs ſkilful hand
"(Such as diſquiet always what is well,
"And by ill-imitating would excel,)
"Might hence preſume the whole creation's day
"To change in ſcenes, and ſhew it in a play."

It is another of his haſty productions; for the heat of his imagination raiſed it in a month.

This compoſition is addreſſed to the Princeſs of Modena, then Dutcheſs of York, in a ſtrain of flattery which diſgraces genius, and which it was wonderful that any man that knew the meaning of his own words could uſe without ſelf-deteſtation. It is an attempt to mingle Earth and Heaven, by praiſing human excellence in the language of religion.

* Downes ſays, it was performed on a very unlucky day, viz. that on which the Duke of Monmouth landed in the Weſt; and he intimates, that the conſternation into which the kingdom was thrown by this event was a reaſon why it was performed but ſix times, and was in general ill received. H.

The

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The preface contains an apology for heroick verſe and poetick licence; by which is meant not any liberty taken in contracting or extending words, but the uſe of bold fictions and ambitious figures.

The reaſon which he gives for printing what was never acted cannot be overpaſſed: "I was induced "to it in my own defence, many hundred copies of "it being diſperſed abroad without my knowledge "or conſent; and every one gathering new faults, "it became at length a libel againſt me." Theſe copies, as they gathered faults, were apparently manuſcript; and he lived in an age very unlike ours, if many hundred copies of fourteen hundred lines were likely to be tranſcribed. An author has a right to print his own works, and need not ſeek an apology in falſehood; but he that could bear to write the dedication felt no pain in writing the preface.

Aureng Zebe (1676) is a tragedy founded on the actions of a great prince then reigning, but over nations not likely to employ their criticks upon the tranſactions of the Engliſh ſtage. If he had known and diſliked his own character, our trade was not in thoſe times ſecure from his reſentment. His country is at ſuch a diſtance, that the manners might be ſafely falſified, and the incidents feigned; for the remoteneſs of place is remarked, by Racine, to afford the ſame conveniencies to a poet as length of time.

This play is written in rhyme; and has the appearance of being the moſt elaborate of all the dramas. The perſonages are imperial; but the dia-

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logue is often domeſtick, and therefore ſuſceptible of ſentiments accommodated to familiar incidents. The complaint of life is celebrated; and there are many other paſſages that may be read with pleaſure.

This play is addreſſed to the Earl of Mulgrave, afterwards Duke of Buckingham, himſelf, if not a poet, yet a writer of verſes, and a critick. In this addreſs Dryden gave the firſt hints of his intention to write an epick poem. He mentions his deſign in terms ſo obſcure, that he ſeems afraid leſt his plan ſhould be purloined, as, he ſays, happened to him when he told it more plainly in his preface to Juvenal. "The deſign," ſays he, "you "know is great, the ſtory Engliſh, and neither too "near the preſent times, nor too diſtant from "them."

All for Love, or the World well Loſt (1678), a tragedy founded upon the ſtory of Antony and Cleopatra, he tells us, "is the only play which he "wrote for himſelf:" the reſt were given to the people. It is by univerſal conſent accounted the work in which he has admitted the feweſt improprieties of ſtyle or character; but it has one fault equal to many, though rather moral than critical, that, by admitting the romantick omnipotence of Love, he has recommended, as laudable and worthy of imitation, that conduct which, through all ages, the good have cenſured as vicious, and the bad deſpiſed as fooliſh.

Of this play the prologue and the epilogue, though written upon the common topicks of malicious and ignorant criticiſm, and without any particular

ticular relation to the characters or incidents of the drama, are deſervedly celebrated for their elegance and ſprightlineſs.

Limberham, or the kind Keeper (1680), is a comedy, which, after the third night, was prohibited as too indecent for the ſtage. What gave offence, was in the printing, as the author ſays, altered or omitted. Dryden confeſſes that its indecency was objected to; but Langbaine, who yet ſeldom favours him, imputes its expulſion to reſentment, becauſe it "ſo much expoſed the keeping part of "the town."

Oedipus (1679) is a tragedy formed by Dryden and Lee, in conjunction, from the works of Sophocles, Seneca, and Corneille. Dryden planned the ſcenes, and compoſed the firſt and third acts.

Don Sebaſtian (1690) is commonly eſteemed either the firſt or ſecond of his dramatick performances. It is too long to be all acted, and has many characters and many incidents; and though it is not without ſallies of frantick dignity, and more noiſe than meaning, yet, as it makes approaches to the poſſibilities of real life, and has ſome ſentiments which leave a ſtrong impreſſion, it continued long to attract attention. Amidſt the diſtreſſes of princes, and the viciſſitudes of empire, are inſerted ſeveral ſcenes which the writer intended for comick; but which, I ſuppoſe, that age did not much commend, and this would not endure. There are, however, paſſages of excellence univerſally acknowledged; the diſpute and the reconciliation of Dorax and Sebaſtian has always been admired.

This

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This play was first acted in 1690, after Dryden had for some years discontinued dramatick poetry.

Amphytrion is a comedy derived from Plautus and Moliere. The dedication is dated Oct. 1690. This play seems to have succeeded at its first appearance; and was, I think, long considered as a very diverting entertainment.

Cleomenes (1692) is a tragedy, only remarkable as it occasioned an incident related in the *Guardian*, and allusively mentioned by Dryden in his preface. As he came out from the representation, he was accosted thus by some airy strippling: "Had I been "left alone with a young beauty, I would not have "spent my time like your Spartan." "That, Sir," said Dryden, "perhaps is true; but give me leave "to tell you that you are no hero."

King Arthur (1691) is another opera. It was the last work that Dryden performed for King Charles, who did not live to see it exhibited, and it does not seem to have been ever brought upon the stage *. In the dedication to the Marquis of Halifax, there is a very elegant character of Charles, and a pleasing account of his latter life. When this was first brought upon the stage, news that the Duke of Monmouth had landed was told in the theatre, upon which the company departed, and *Arthur* was exhibited no more.

His last drama was *Love Triumphant*, a tragi-comedy. In his dedication to the Earl of Salisbury he mentions "the lowness of fortune to which he has

* This is a mistake. It was set to musick by Purcell, and well received, and is yet a favourite entertainment. H.

"vo-

"voluntarily reduced himſelf, and of which he has "no reaſon to be aſhamed."

This play appeared in 1694. It is ſaid to have been unſucceſsful. The cataſtrophe, proceeding merely from a change of mind, is confeſſed by the author to be defective. Thus he began and ended his dramatick labours with ill ſucceſs.

From ſuch a number of theatrical pieces, it will be ſuppoſed, by moſt readers, that he muſt have improved his fortune; at leaſt, that ſuch diligence with ſuch abilities muſt have ſet penury at defiance. But in Dryden's time the drama was very far from that univerſal approbation which it has now obtained. The playhouſe was abhorred by the Puritans, and avoided by thoſe who deſired the character of ſeriouſneſs or decency. A grave lawyer would have debaſed his dignity, and a young trader would have impaired his credit, by appearing in thoſe manſions of diſſolute licentiouſneſs. The profits of the theatre, when ſo many claſſes of the people were deducted from the audience, were not great; and the poet had, for a long time, but a ſingle night. The firſt that had two nights was *Southern*; and the firſt that had three was *Rowe*. There were, however, in thoſe days, arts of improving a poet's profit, which Dryden forbore to practiſe; and a play therefore ſeldom produced him more than a hundred pounds, by the accumulated gain of the third night, the dedication, and the copy.

Almoſt every piece had a dedication, written with ſuch elegance and luxuriance of praiſe, as neither haughtineſs nor avarice could be imagined able to reſiſt. But he ſeems to have made flattery too cheap,

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cheap. That praiſe is worth nothing of which the price is known.

To increaſe the value of his copies, he often accompanied his work with a preface of criticiſm; a kind of learning then almoſt new in the Engliſh language, and which he, who had conſidered with great accuracy the principles of writing, was able to diſtribute copiouſly as occaſions aroſe. By theſe diſſertations the publick judgement muſt have been much improved; and Swift, who converſed with Dryden, relates that he regretted the ſucceſs of his own inſtructions, and found his readers made ſuddenly too ſkilful to be eaſily ſatisfied.

His prologues had ſuch reputation, that for ſome time a play was conſidered as leſs likely to be well received, if ſome of his verſes did not introduce it. The price of a prologue was two guineas, till, being aſked to write one for Mr. Southern, he demanded three: "Not," ſaid he, "young man, out of diſ-"reſpect to you; but the players have had my goods "too cheap."

Though he declares, that in his own opinion his genius was not dramatick, he had great confidence in his own fertility; for he is ſaid to have engaged, by contract, to furniſh four plays a year.

It is certain that in one year, 1678 *, he publiſhed *All for Love*, *Aſſignation*, two parts of the *Conqueſt of Granada*, *Sir Martin Marr-all*, and the *State of Innocence*, ſix complete plays, with a celerity of performance, which, though all Langbane's charges

* Dr. Johnſon in this aſſertion was miſled by Langbaine. Only one of theſe plays appeared in 1678. Nor were there more than three in any one year. The dates are now added from the original editions. R.

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of plagiarism should be allowed, shews such facility of composition, such readiness of language, and such copiousness of sentiment, as, since the time of Lopez de Vega, perhaps no other author has ever possessed.

He did not enjoy his reputation, however great, nor his profits, however small, without molestation. He had criticks to endure, and rivals to oppose. The two most distinguished wits of the nobility, the Duke of Buckingham and Earl of Rochester, declared themselves his enemies.

Buckingham characterised him, in 1671, by the name of *Bayes* in the *Rehearsal*; a farce which he is said to have written with the assistance of Butler, the author of *Hudibras*; Martin Clifford, of the Charter-house; and Dr. Sprat, the friend of Cowley, then his Chaplain. Dryden and his friends laughed at the length of time, and the number of hands, employed upon this performance; in which, though by some artifice of action it yet keeps possession of the stage, it is not possible now to find any thing that might not have been written without so long delay, or a confederacy so numerous.

To adjust the minute events of literary history, is tedious and troublesome; it requires indeed no great force of understanding, but often depends upon enquiries which there is no opportunity of making, or is to be fetched from books and pamphlets not always at hand.

The *Rehearsal* was played in 1671 *, and yet is represented as ridiculing passages in the *Conquest of Granada* † and *Assignation*, which were not published

* It was published in 1672. R.

† *The Conquest of Granada* was published in 1672; *The Assignation*, in 1673; *Marriage à-la-mode* in the same year; and *Tyrannick Love*, in 1672.

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till 1678; in *Marriage à-la-mode*, publiſhed in 1673: and in *Tyrannick Love*, in 1677. Theſe contradictions ſhew how raſhly ſatire is applied.

It is ſaid that this farce was originally intended againſt Davenant, who, in the firſt draught, was characteriſed by the name of *Bilboa*. Davenant had been a ſoldier and an adventurer.

There is one paſſage in the *Rehearſal* ſtill remaining, which ſeems to have related originally to Davenant. *Bayes* hurts his noſe, and comes in with brown paper applied to the bruiſe; how this affected Dryden, does not appear. Davenant's noſe had ſuffered ſuch diminution by miſhaps among the women, that a patch upon that part evidently denoted him.

It is ſaid likewiſe that Sir Robert Howard was once meant. The deſign was probably to ridicule the reigning poet, whatever he might be.

Much of the perſonal ſatire, to which it might owe its firſt reception, is now loſt or obſcured. *Bayes* probably imitated the dreſs, and mimicked the manner, of Dryden: the cant words which are ſo often in his mouth may be ſuppoſed to have been Dryden's habitual phraſes, or cuſtomary exclamations. *Bayes*, when he is to write, is blooded and purged; this, as Lamotte relates himſelf to have heard, was the real practice of the poet.

There were other ſtrokes in the *Rehearſal* by which malice was gratified; the debate between Love and Honour, which keeps prince *Volſcius* in a ſingle boot, is ſaid to have alluded to the miſconduct of the Duke of Ormond, who loſt Dublin to the rebels while he was toying with a miſtreſs.

The Earl of Rocheſter, to ſuppreſs the reputation of Dryden, took Settle into his protection, and endeavoured

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deavoured to perſuade the publick that its approbation had been to that time miſplaced. Settle was a while in high reputation; his *Empreſs of Morocco*, having firſt delighted the town, was carried in triumph to Whitehall, and played by the ladies of the court. Now was the poetical meteor at the higheſt: the next moment began its fall. Rocheſter withdrew his patronage; ſeeming reſolved, ſays one of his biographers, "to have a judgement contrary "to that of the town;" perhaps being unable to endure any reputation beyond a certain height, even when he had himſelf contributed to raiſe it.

Neither criticks nor rivals did Dryden much miſchief, unleſs they gained from his own temper the power of vexing him, which his frequent burſts of reſentment give reaſon to ſuſpect. He is always angry at ſome paſt, or afraid of ſome future cenſure; but he leſſens the ſmart of his wounds by the balm of his own approbation, and endeavours to repel the ſhafts of criticiſm by oppoſing a ſhield of adamantine confidence.

The perpetual accuſation produced againſt him, was that of plagiariſm, againſt which he never attempted any vigorous defence; for though he was perhaps ſometimes injuriouſly cenſured, he would, by denying part of the charge, have confeſſed the reſt; and, as his adverſaries had the proof in their own hands, he, who knew that wit had little power againſt facts, wiſely left, in that perplexity which it generally produces, a queſtion which it was his intereſt to ſuppreſs, and which, unleſs provoked by vindication, few were likely to examine.

Though the life of a writer, from about thirty-five

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to ſixty-three, may be ſuppoſed to have been ſufficiently buſied by the compoſition of eight-and-twenty pieces for the ſtage, Dryden found room in the ſame ſpace for many other undertakings.

But, how much ſoever he wrote, he was at leaſt once ſuſpected of writing more; for, in 1679, a paper of verſes, called *An Eſſay on Satire*, was ſhewn about in manuſcript; by which the Earl of Rocheſter, the Ducheſs of Portſmouth, and others, were ſo much provoked, that, as was ſuppoſed (for the actors were never diſcovered), they procured Dryden, whom they ſuſpected as the author, to be waylaid and beaten. This incident is mentioned by the Duke of Buckinghamſhire, the true writer, in his Art of Poetry; where he ſays of Dryden,

> Though prais'd and beaten for another's rhymes,
> His own deſerve as great applauſe ſometimes.

His reputation in time was ſuch, that his name was thought neceſſary to the ſucceſs of every poetical or literary performance, and therefore he was engaged to contribute ſomething, whatever it might be, to many publications. He prefixed the Life of Polybius to the tranſlation of Sir Henry Sheers: and thoſe of Lucian and Plutarch, to verſions of their works by different hands. Of the Engliſh Tacitus he tranſlated the firſt book; and, if Gordon be credited, tranſlated it from the French. Such a charge can hardly be mentioned without ſome degree of indignation; but it is not, I ſuppoſe, ſo much to be inferred, that Dryden wanted the literature neceſſary to the peruſal of Tacitus, as that, conſidering himſelf as hidden in a crowd, he had no awe of the publick; and, writing

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merely for money, was contented to get it by the neareſt way.

In 1680, the Epiſtles of Ovid being tranſlated by the poets of the time, among which one was the work of Dryden, and another of Dryden and Lord Mulgrave, it was neceſſary to introduce them by a preface; and Dryden, who on ſuch occaſions was regularly ſummoned, prefixed a diſcourſe upon tranſlation, which was then ſtruggling for the liberty that it now enjoys. Why it ſhould find any difficulty in breaking the ſhackles of verbal interpretation, which muſt for ever debar it from elegance, it would be difficult to conjecture, were not the power of prejudice every day obſerved. The authority of Jonſon, Sandys, and Holiday, had fixed the judgement of the nation; and it was not eaſily believed that a better way could be found than they had taken, though Fanſhaw, Denham, Waller, and Cowley, had tried to give examples of a different practice.

In 1681, Dryden became yet more conſpicuous by uniting politicks with poetry, in the memorable ſatire called *Abſalom and Achitophel*, written againſt the faction which, by Lord Shafteſbury's incitement, ſet the Duke of Monmouth at its head.

Of this poem, in which perſonal ſatire was applied to the ſupport of public principles, and in which therefore every mind was intereſted, the reception was eager, and the ſale ſo large, that my father, an old bookſeller, told me, he had not known it equalled but by *Sacheverell*'s trial.

The reaſon of this general peruſal Addiſon has attempted to derive from the delight which the mind feels in the inveſtigation of ſecrets; and thinks that

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curiosity to decipher the names procured readers to the poem. There is no need to enquire why those verses were read, which, to all the attractions of wit, elegance, and harmony, added the co-operation of all the factious passions, and filled every mind with triumph or resentment.

It could not be supposed that all the provocation given by Dryden would be endured without resistance or reply. Both his person and his party were exposed in their turns to the shafts of satire, which, though neither so well pointed, nor perhaps so well aimed, undoubtedly drew blood.

One of these poems is called *Dryden's Satire on his Muse:* ascribed, though, as Pope says, falsely, to *Somers*, who was afterwards chancellor. The poem, whosesoever it was, has much virulence, and some sprightliness. The writer tells all the ill that he can collect both of Dryden and his friends.

The poem of *Absalom and Achitophel* had two answers, now both forgotten; one called *Azaria and Hushai*; the other *Absolom senior*. Of these hostile compositions, Dryden apparently imputes *Absalom senior* to *Settle*, by quoting in his verses against him the second line. *Azaria and Hushai* was, as *Wood* says, imputed to him, though it is somewhat unlikely that he should write twice on the same occasion. This is a difficulty which I cannot remove, for want of a minuter knowledge of poetical transactions.

The same year he published *The Medal*, of which the subject is a medal struck on Lord Shaftesbury's escape from a prosecution, by the *ignoramus* of a grand jury of Londoners.

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In both poems he maintains the ſame principles, and ſaw them both attacked by the ſame antagoniſt. Elkanah Settle, who had anſwered *Abſalom*, appeared with equal courage in oppoſition to *The Medal*, and publiſhed an anſwer called *The Medal reverſed*, with ſo much ſucceſs in both encounters, that he left the palm doubtful, and divided the ſuffrages of the nation. Such are the revolutions of fame, or ſuch is the prevalence of faſhion, that the man, whoſe works have not yet been thought to deſerve the care of collecting them, who died forgotten in an hoſpital, and whoſe latter years were ſpent in contriving ſhows for fairs, and carrying an elegy or epithalamium, of which the beginning and end were occaſionally varied, but the intermediate parts were always the ſame, to every houſe where there was a funeral or a wedding, might with truth have had inſcribed upon his ſtone,

Here lies the Rival and Antagoniſt of Dryden.

Settle was, for his rebellion, ſeverely chaſtiſed by Dryden under the name of *Doeg*, in the ſecond part of *Abſalom and Achitophel*; and was perhaps for his factious audacity made the city poet, whoſe annual office was to deſcribe the glories of the Mayor's day. Of theſe bards he was the laſt, and ſeems not much to have deſerved even this degree of regard, if it was paid to his political opinions: for he afterwards wrote a panegyrick on the virtues of judge Jefferies; and what more could have been done by the meaneſt zealot for prerogative?

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Of tranſlated fragments, or occaſional poems, to enumerate the titles, or ſettle the dates, would be tedious, with little uſe. It may be obſerved, that, as Dryden's genius was commonly excited by ſome perſonal regard, he rarely writes upon a general topick.

Soon after the acceſſion of King James, when the deſign of reconciling the nation to the Church of Rome became apparent, and the religion of the court gave the only efficacious title to its favours, Dryden declared himſelf a convert to Popery. This at any other time might have paſſed with little cenſure. Sir *Kenelm Digby* embraced Popery; the two *Reynolds* reciprocally converted one another *; and *Chillingworth* himſelf was a while ſo entangled in the wilds of controverſy, as to retire for quiet to an infallible Church. If men of argument and ſtudy can find ſuch difficulties, or ſuch motives, as may either unite them to the Church of Rome, or detain them in uncertainty, there can be no wonder that a man, who perhaps never enquired why he was a Proteſtant, ſhould by an artful and experienced diſputant be made a Papiſt, overborn by the ſudden violence of new and unexpected arguments, or deceived by a repreſentation which ſhews only the doubts on one part, and only the evidence on the other.

That converſion will always be ſuſpected that apparently concurs with intereſt. He that never finds

* Dr. John Reynolds, who lived temp. Jac. I. was at firſt a zealous Papiſt, and his brother William as earneſt a Proteſtant; but, by mutual diſputation, each converted the other. See Fuller's Church Hiſtory, p. 47. book X. H.

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his error till it hinders his progreſs towards wealth or honour, will not be thought to love Truth only for herſelf. Yet it may eaſily happen that information may come at a commodious time; and, as truth and intereſt are not by any fatal neceſſity at variance, that one may by accident introduce the other. When opinions are ſtruggling into popularity, the arguments by which they are oppoſed or defended become more known; and he that changes his profeſſion would perhaps have changed it before, with the like opportunities of inſtruction. This was the then ſtate of Popery; every artifice was uſed to ſhew it in its faireſt form; and it muſt be owned to be a religion of external appearance ſufficiently attractive.

It is natural to hope that a comprehenſive is likewiſe an elevated ſoul, and that whoever is wiſe is alſo honeſt. I am willing to believe that Dryden, having employed his mind, active as it was, upon different ſtudies, and filled it, capacious as it was, with other materials, came unprovided to the controverſy, and wanted rather ſkill to diſcover the right, than virtue to maintain it. But enquiries into the heart are not for man; we muſt now leave him to his Judge.

The prieſts, having ſtrengthened their cauſe by ſo powerful an adherent, were not long before they brought him into action. They engaged him to defend the controverſial papers found in the ſtrong box of Charles the Second; and, what yet was harder, to defend them againſt Stillingfleet.

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With hopes of promoting Popery, he was employed to tranſlate Maimbourg's Hiſtory of the League; which he publiſhed with a large introduction. His name is likewiſe prefixed to the Engliſh Life of Francis Xavier; but I know not that he ever owned himſelf the tranſlator. Perhaps the uſe of his name was a pious fraud, which however ſeems not to have had much effect; for neither of the books, I believe, was ever popular.

The verſion of Xavier's Life is commended by Brown, in a pamphlet not written to flatter; and the occaſion of it is ſaid to have been, that the Queen, when ſhe ſolicited a ſon, made vows to him as her tutelary ſaint.

He was ſuppoſed to have undertaken to tranſlate *Varillas's Hiſtory of Hereſies*; and, when Burnet publiſhed remarks upon it, to have written an *Anſwer*; upon which Burnet makes the following obſervation:

"I have been informed from England, that a "gentleman, who is famous both for poetry and "ſeveral other things, had ſpent three months in "tranſlating M. Varillas's Hiſtory; but that, as ſoon "as my Reflections appeared, he diſcontinued his la-"bour, finding the credit of his author was gone. "Now, if he thinks it is recovered by his Anſwer, "he will perhaps go on with his tranſlation; and "this may be, for aught I know, as good an enter-"tainment for him as the converſation that he had "ſet on between the Hinds and Panthers, and all "the reſt of animals, for whom M. Varillas may "ſerve well enough as an author: and this hiſtory "and that poem are ſuch extraordinary things of "their

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"their kind, that it will be but ſuitable to ſee "the author of the worſt poem become likewiſe "the tranſlator of the worſt hiſtory that the age has "produced. If his grace and his wit improve "both proportionably, he will hardly find that he "has gained much by the change he has made, "from having no religion, to chuſe one of the "worſt. It is true, he had ſomewhat to ſink from "in matter of wit; but, as for his morals, it is "ſcarcely poſſible for him to grow a worſe man "than he was. He has lately wreaked his malice "on me for ſpoiling his three months labour; but "in it he has done me all the honour that any man "can receive from him, which is to be railed at by "him. If I had ill-nature enough to prompt me "to wiſh a very bad wiſh for him, it ſhould be, "that he would go on and finiſh his tranſlation. "By that it will appear, whether the Engliſh na-"tion, which is the moſt competent judge in this "matter, has, upon the ſeeing our debate, pro-"nounced in M. Varillas's favour, or in mine. It is "true, Mr. D. will ſuffer a little by it; but at "leaſt it will ſerve to keep him in from other "extravagances; and if he gains little honour "by this work, yet he cannot loſe ſo much by it "as he has done by his laſt employment."

Having probably felt his own inferiority in theological controverſy, he was deſirous of trying whether, by bringing poetry to aid his arguments, he might become a more efficacious defender of his new profeſſion. To reaſon in verſe was, indeed, one of his powers; but ſubtilty and harmony, united, are ſtill feeble, when oppoſed to truth.

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Actuated therefore by zeal for Rome, or hope of fame, he publiſhed the *Hind and Panther*, a poem in which the Church of Rome, figured by the *milk-white Hind*, defends her tenets againſt the Church of England, repreſented by the *Panther*, a beaſt beautiful, but ſpotted.

A fable, which exhibits two beaſts talking Theology, appears at once full of abſurdity; and it was accordingly ridiculed in the *City Mouſe* and *Country Mouſe*, a parody, written by Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax, and Prior, who then gave the firſt ſpecimen of his abilities.

The converſion of ſuch a man, at ſuch a time, was not likely to paſs uncenſured. Three dialogues were publiſhed by the facetious Thomas Brown, of which the two firſt were called *Reaſons of Mr. Bayes's changing his Religion*: and the third, *the Reaſons of Mr. Hains the Player's Converſion and Re-converſion.* The firſt was printed in 1688, the ſecond not till 1690, the third in 1691. The clamour ſeems to have been long continued, and the ſubject to have ſtrongly fixed the publick attention.

In the two firſt dialogues Bayes is brought into the company of Crites and Eugenius, with whom he had formerly debated on dramatick poetry. The two talkers in the third are Mr. Bayes and Mr. Hains.

Brown was a man not deficient in literature, nor deſtitute of fancy; but he ſeems to have thought it the pinnacle of excellence to be a *merry fellow*; and therefore laid out his powers upon ſmall jeſts or groſs buffoonery; ſo that his performances have little intrinſick value, and were read only while they were recommended

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commended by the novelty of the event that occasioned them.

These dialogues are like his other works: what sense or knowledge they contain is disgraced by the garb in which it is exhibited. One great source of pleasure is to call Dryden *little Bayes*. Ajax, who happens to be mentioned, is "he that wore as many "cow-hides upon his shield as would have furnished "half the King's army with shoe-leather."

Being asked whether he had seen the *Hind and Panther*, Crites answers: "Seen it! Mr. Bayes, "why I can stir no where but it pursues me; it "haunts me worse than a pewter-buttoned serjeant "does a decayed cit. Sometimes I meet it in a "band-box, when my laundress brings home my "linen; sometimes, whether I will or no, it lights "my pipe at a coffee-house; sometimes it surprises "me in a trunk-maker's shop; and sometimes it re-"freshes my memory for me on the backside of a "Chancery-lane parcel. For your comfort too, "Mr. Bayes, I have not only seen it, as you may "perceive, but have read it too, and can quote it "as freely upon occasion as a frugal tradesman can "quote that noble treatise the *Worth of a Penny* to "his extravagant 'prentice, that revels in stewed "apples and penny custards."

The whole animation of these compositions arises from a profusion of ludicrous and affected comparisons. "To secure one's chastity," says Bayes, "lit-"tle more is necessary than to leave off a correspon-"dence with the other sex, which, to a wise man, "is no greater a punishment than it would be to a "fanatick person to forbid seeing *The Cheats* and

"*The*

"*The Committee*; or for my Lord Mayor and Alder-
"men to be interdicted the ſight of *The London*
"*Cuckolds*." This is the general ſtrain, and therefore I ſhall be eaſily excuſed the labour of more tranſcription.

Brown does not wholly forget paſt tranſactions: "You began," ſays Crites to Bayes, "a very dif-
"ferent religion, and have not mended the matter
"in your laſt choice. It was but reaſon that your
"Muſe, which appeared firſt in a tyrant's quarrel,
"ſhould employ her laſt efforts to juſtify the uſur-
"pation of the *Hind*."

Next year the nation was ſummoned to celebrate the birth of the Prince. Now was the time for Dryden to rouſe his imagination, and ſtrain his voice. Happy days were at hand, and he was willing to enjoy and diffuſe the anticipated bleſſings. He publiſhed a poem, filled with predictions of greatneſs and proſperity; predictions, of which it is not neceſſary to tell how they have been verified.

A few months paſſed after theſe joyful notes, and every bloſſom of Popiſh Hope was blaſted for ever by the Revolution. A Papiſt now could be no longer laureat. The revenue, which he had enjoyed with ſo much pride and praiſe, was transferred to Shadwell, an old enemy, whom he had formerly ſtigmatiſed by the name of *Og*. Dryden could not decently complain that he was depoſed; but ſeemed very angry that Shadwell ſucceeded him, and has therefore celebrated the intruder's inauguration in a poem exquiſitely ſatirical, called *Mac Flecknoe*; of which the Dunciad, as Pope himſelf declares, is an imitation,

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imitation, though more extended in its plan, and more diversified in its incidents.

It is related by Prior, that Lord Dorset, when as chamberlain he was constrained to eject Dryden from his office, gave him from his own purse an allowance equal to the salary. This is no romantick or incredible act of generosity; an hundred a year is often enough given to claims less cogent by men less famed for liberality. Yet Dryden always represented himself as suffering under a public infliction; and once particularly demands respect for the patience with which he endured the loss of his little fortune. His patron might, indeed, enjoin him to suppress his bounty; but, if he suffered nothing, he should not have complained.

During the short reign of King James, he had written nothing for the stage *, being, in his opinion, more profitably employed in controversy and flattery. Of praise he might perhaps have been less lavish without inconvenience, for James was never said to have much regard for poetry: he was to be flattered only by adopting his religion.

Times were now changed: Dryden was no longer the court-poet, and was to look back for support to his former trade; and having waited about two years, either considering himself as discountenanced by the publick, or perhaps expecting a second Revolution, he produced *Don Sebastian* in 1690; and in the next four years four dramas more.

* Albion and Albianus must however be excepted. R.

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In 1693 appeared a new verſion of Juvenal and Perſius. Of Juvenal he tranſlated the firſt, third, ſixth, tenth, and ſixteenth ſatires; and of Perſius the whole work. On this occaſion he introduced his two ſons to the publick, as nurſelings of the Muſes. The fourteenth of Juvenal was the work of John, and the ſeventh of Charles Dryden. He prefixed a very ample preface, in the form of a dedication to Lord Dorſet; and there gives an account of the deſign which he had once formed to write an epick poem on the actions either of Arthur or the Black Prince. He conſidered the epick as neceſſarily including ſome kind of ſupernatural agency, and had imagined a new kind of conteſt between the guardian angels of kingdoms, of whom he conceived that each might be repreſented zealous for his charge, without any intended oppoſition to the purpoſes of the Supreme Being, of which all created minds muſt in part be ignorant.

This is the moſt reaſonable ſcheme of celeſtial interpoſition that ever was formed. The ſurprizes and terrors of enchantments, which have ſucceeded to the intrigues and oppoſitions of Pagan deities, afford very ſtriking ſcenes, and open a vaſt extent to the imagination; but, as Boileau obſerves (and Boileau will be ſeldom found miſtaken), with this incurable defect, that, in a conteſt between Heaven and Hell, we know at the beginning which is to prevail; for this reaſon we follow Rinaldo to the enchanted wood with more curioſity than terror.

In the ſcheme of Dryden there is one great difficulty, which yet he would perhaps have had addreſs enough to ſurmount. In a war juſtice can be

but

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but on one ſide; and, to entitle the hero to the protection of angels, he muſt fight in defence of indubitable right. Yet ſome of the celeſtial beings, thus oppoſed to each other, muſt have been repreſented as defending guilt.

That this poem was never written, is reaſonably to be lamented. It would doubtleſs have improved our numbers, and enlarged our language; and might perhaps have contributed by pleaſing inſtructions to rectify our opinions, and purify our manners.

What he required as the indiſpenſable condition of ſuch an undertaking, a publick ſtipend, was not likely in theſe times to be obtained. Riches were not become familiar to us; nor had the nation yet learned to be liberal.

This plan he charged Blackmore with ſtealing; "only," ſays he, "the guardian angels of king-"doms were machines too ponderous for him to "manage."

In 1694, he began the moſt laborious and difficult of all his works, the tranſlation of Virgil; from which he borrowed two months, that he might turn "Freſnoy's Art of Painting" into Engliſh proſe. The preface, which he boaſts to have written in twelve mornings, exhibits a parallel of poetry and painting, with a miſcellaneous collection of critical remarks, ſuch as coſt a mind ſtored like his no labour to produce them.

In 1697, he publiſhed his verſion of the works of Virgil; and, that no opportunity of profit might be loſt, dedicated the Paſtorals to the Lord Clifford, the Georgicks to the Earl of Cheſterfield, and the

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Æneid to the Earl of Mulgrave. This œconomy of flattery, at once lavish and discreet, did not pass without observation.

This translation was censured by Milbourne, a clergyman, styled, by Pope, "the fairest of critics," because he exhibited his own version to be compared with that which he condemned.

His last work was his Fables, published in consequence, as is supposed, of a contract now in the hands of Mr. Tonson: by which he obliged himself, in consideration of three hundred pounds, to finish for the press ten thousand verses.

In this volume is comprised the well-known ode on St. Cecilia's day, which, as appeared by a letter communicated to Dr. Birch, he spent a fortnight in composing and correcting. But what is this to the patience and diligence of Boileau, whose *Equivoque*, a poem of only three hundred and forty-six lines, took from his life eleven months to write it, and three years to revise it?

Part of his book of Fables is the first Iliad in English, intended as a specimen of a version of the whole. Considering into what hands Homer was to fall, the reader cannot but rejoice that this project went no further.

The time was now at hand which was to put an end to all his schemes and labours. On the first of May, 1701, having been some time, as he tells us, a cripple in his limbs, he died, in Gerard-street, of a mortification in his leg.

There is extant a wild story relating to some vexatious events that happened at his funeral, which, at the end of Congreve's Life, by a writer of I know

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know not what credit, are thus related, as I find the account transferred to a biographical dictionary.

"Mr. Dryden dying on the Wednesday morning, "Dr. Thomas Sprat, then Bishop of Rochester and "Dean of Westminster, sent the next day to the "Lady Elizabeth Howard, Mr. Dryden's widow, "that he would make a present of the ground, which "was forty pounds, with all the other Abbey-fees. "The Lord Halifax likewise sent to the Lady Eliza-"beth, and Mr. Charles Dryden her son, that, if "they would give him leave to bury Mr. Dryden, "he would inter him with a gentleman's private fu-"neral, and afterwards bestow five hundred pounds "on a monument in the Abbey; which, as they "had no reason to refuse, they accepted. On the "Saturday following the company came; the corpse "was put into a velvet hearse; and eighteen mourn-"ing coaches, filled with company, attended. "When they were just ready to move, the Lord Jef-"feries, son of the Lord Chancellor Jefferies, with "some of his rakish companions, coming by, asked "whose funeral it was: and being told Mr. Dry-"den's, he said, 'What, shall Dryden, the greatest "honour and ornament of the nation, be buried af-"ter this private manner! No, gentlemen, let all "that loved Mr. Dryden, and honour his memory, "alight and join with me in gaining my lady's con-"sent to let me have the honour of his interment, "which shall be after another manner than this; "and I will bestow a thousand pounds on a monu-"ment in the Abbey for him.' The gentlemen in "the coaches, not knowing of the Bishop of Ro-"chester's favour, nor of the lord Halifax's generous "design

" design (they both having, out of respect to the fa-
" mily, enjoined the Lady Elizabeth, and her son,
" to keep their favour concealed to the world, and
" let it pass for their own expence), readily came
" out of their coaches, and attended Lord Jefferies
" up to the lady's bedside, who was then sick. He
" repeated the purport of what he had before said;
" but she absolutely refusing, he fell on his knees,
" vowing never to rise till his request was granted.
" The rest of the company by his desire kneeled
" also; and the lady, being under a sudden sur-
" prize, fainted away. As soon as she recovered
" her speech, she cried, *No, no.* Enough, gentle-
" men, replied he; my lady is very good, she says,
" *Go, go.* She repeated her former words with all
" her strength, but in vain, for her feeble voice
" was lost in their acclamations of joy; and the
" Lord Jefferies ordered the hearsemen to carry the
" corpse to Mr. Russel's, an undertaker in Cheap-
" side, and leave it there till he should send orders
" for the embalment, which, he added, should be
" after the royal maner. His directions were obey-
" ed, the company dispersed, and Lady Elizabeth
" and her son remained inconsolable. The next
" day Mr. Charles Dryden waited on the Lord Ha-
" lifax and the Bishop, to excuse his mother and
" himself, by relating the real truth. But neither his
" Lordship nor the Bishop would admit of any plea;
" especially the latter, who had the Abbey lighted,
" the ground opened, the choir attending, an an-
" them ready set, and himself waiting for some time
" without any corpse to bury. The undertaker,
" after three days expectance of orders for embal-
" ment without receiving any, waited on the Lord
" Jefferies,

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"Jefferies; who, pretending ignorance of the matter, "turned it off with an ill-natured jeſt, ſaying, that "thoſe who obſerved the orders of a drunken frolick "deſerved no better; that he remembered nothing "at all of it; and that he might do what he pleaſed "with the corpſe. Upon this, the undertaker "waited upon the Lady Elizabeth and her ſon, and "threatened to bring the corpſe home, and ſet it "before the door. They deſired a day's reſpite, "which was granted. Mr. Charles Dryden wrote a "handſome letter to the Lord Jefferies, who returned "it with this cool anſwer: 'That he knew nothing "of the matter, and would be troubled no more "about it.' He then addreſſed the Lord Halifax "and the biſhop of Rocheſter, who abſolutely re-"fuſed to do any thing in it. In this diſtreſs Dr. "Garth ſent for the corpſe to the College of Phyſi-"cians, and propoſed a funeral by ſubſcription, to "which himſelf ſet a moſt noble example. At laſt "a day, about three weeks after Mr. Dryden's de-"ceaſe, was appointed for the interment. Dr. Garth "pronounced a fine Latin oration, at the College, "over the corpſe; which was attended to the Abbey "by a numerous train of coaches. When the funeral "was over, Mr. Charles Dryden ſent a challenge to "the Lord Jefferies, who refuſing to anſwer it, he "ſent ſeveral others and went often himſelf; but "could neither get a letter delivered, nor admittance "to ſpeak to him; which ſo incenſed him, that he "reſolved, ſince his Lordſhip refuſed to anſwer him "like a gentleman, that he would watch an oppor-"tunity to meet and fight off-hand, though with "all the rules of honour; which his Lordſhip hear-

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"ing, left the town: and Mr. Charles Dryden could "never have the satisfaction of meeting him, though "he sought it till his death with the utmost applica-"tion."

This story I once intended to omit, as it appears with no great evidence; nor have I met with any confirmation, but in a letter of Farquhar; and he only relates that the funeral of Dryden was tumultuary and confused *.

Supposing the story true, we may remark, that the gradual change of manners, though imperceptible in the process, appears great when different times, and those not very distant, are compared. If at this time a young drunken Lord should interrupt the pompous regularity of a magnificent funeral, what would be the event, but that he would be justled out of the way and compelled to be quiet? If he should thrust himself into an house, he would be sent roughly away; and, what is yet more to the

* An earlier account of Dryden's funeral than that above cited, though without the circumstances that preceded it, is given by Edward Ward, who in his London Spy, published in 1706, relates, that on the occasion there was a performance of solemn Musick at the College, and that at the procession, which himself saw, standing at the end of Chancery-lane, Fleet-street, there was a concert of hautboys and trumpets. The day of Dryden's interment, he says, was Monday the 13th of May, which, according to Johnson, was twelve days after his decease, and shews how long his funeral was in suspense. Ward knew not that the expence of it was defrayed by subscription; but compliments Lord Jefferies for so pious an undertaking. He also says, that the cause of Dryden's death was an inflammation in his toe, occasioned by the flesh growing over the nail, which being neglected produced a mortification in his leg. H.

honour

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honour of the present time, I believe that those, who had subscribed to the funeral of a man like Dryden, would not, for such an accident, have withdrawn their contributions *.

He was buried among the poets in Westminster Abbey, where, though the Duke of Newcastle had, in a general dedication prefixed by Congreve to his dramatick works, accepted thanks for his intention of erecting him a monument, he lay long without distinction, till the Duke of Buckinghamshire gave him a tablet, inscribed only with the name of DRYDEN.

He married the Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the Earl of Berkshire, with circumstances, according to the satire imputed to Lord Somers, not very honourable to either party; by her he had three sons, Charles, John, and Henry. Charles was usher of the palace to Pope Clement the XIth; and, visiting England in 1704, was drowned in an attempt to swim across the Thames at Windsor.

John was author of a comedy called *The Husband his own Cuckold*. He is said to have died at Rome. Henry entered into some religious order. It is some proof of Dryden's sincerity in his second religion, that he taught it to his sons. A man, conscious of hypocritical profession in himself, is not

* In the Register of the College of Physicians, is the following Entry: "May 3, 1700. Comitiis Censoriis ordinariis. At the "request of several persons of quality, that Mr. Dryden might "be carried from the College of Physicians to be interred at West-"minster, it was unanimously granted by the President and "Censors."

This entry is not calculated to afford any credit to the narrative concerning Lord Jefferies. R.

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likely to convert others; and, as his ſons were qualified in 1693 to appear among the tranſlators of Juvenal, they muſt have been taught ſome religion before their father's change.

Of the perſon of Dryden I know not any account; of his mind, the portrait which has been left by Congreve, who knew him with great familiarity, is ſuch as adds our love of his manners to our admiration of his genius. "He was," we are told, "of "a nature exceedingly humane and compaſſionate, "ready to forgive injuries, and capable of a ſincere "reconciliation with thoſe who had offended him. "His friendſhip, where he profeſſed it, went beyond "his profeſſions. He was of a very eaſy, of very "pleaſing acceſs; but ſomewhat ſlow, and, as it were "diffident, in his advances to others: he had that "in nature which abhorred intruſion into any ſociety "whatever. He was therefore leſs known, and con-"ſequently his character became more liable to miſ-"apprehenſions and miſrepreſentations: he was very "modeſt, and very eaſily to be diſcountenanced in "his approaches to his equals or ſuperiors. As his "reading had been very extenſive, ſo was he very "happy in a memory tenacious of every thing that "he had read. He was not more poſſeſſed of know-"ledge than he was communicative of it; but then "his communication was by no means pedantick, or "impoſed upon the converſation, but juſt ſuch, "and went ſo far, as, by the natural turn of the con-"verſation in which he was engaged, it was neceſſa-"rily promoted or required. He was extremely "ready and gentle in his correction of the errors of "any writer who thought fit to conſult him, and "full

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the religion which he disobeyed. He forgot his duty rather than disowned it. His tendency to profaneness is the effect of levity, negligence, and loose conversation, with a desire of accommodating himself to the corruption of the times, by venturing to be wicked as far as he durst. When he professed himself a convert to Popery, he did not pretend to have received any new conviction of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

The persecution of criticks was not the worst of his vexations; he was much more disturbed by the importunities of want. His complaints of poverty are so frequently repeated, either with the dejection of weakness sinking in helpless misery, or the indignation of merit claiming its tribute from mankind, that it is impossible not to detest the age which could impose on such a man the necessity of such solicitations, or not to despise the man who could submit to such solicitations without necessity.

Whether by the world's neglect, or his own imprudence, I am afraid that the greatest part of his life was passed in exigences. Such outcries were surely never uttered but in severe pain. Of his supplies or his expences no probable estimate can now be made. Except the salary of the Laureat, to which King James added the office of Historiographer, perhaps with some additional emoluments, his whole revenue seems to have been casual; and it is well known that he seldom lives frugally who lives by chance. Hope is always liberal; and they that trust her promises make little scruple of revelling to-day on the profits of the morrow.

Of

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Of his plays the profit was not great; and of the produce of his other works very little intelligence can be had. By discoursing with the late amiable Mr. Tonson, I could not find that any memorials of the transactions between his predecessor and Dryden had been preserved, except the following papers:

"I do hereby promise to pay John Dryden, Esq. "or order, on the 25th of March, 1699, the sum of "two hundred and fifty guineas, in consideration of "ten thousand verses, which the said John Dryden, "Esq. is to deliver to me Jacob Tonson, when "finished, whereof seven thousand five hundred "verses, more or less, are already in the said Jacob "Tonson's possession. And I do hereby farther "promise, and engage myself, to make up the said "sum of two hundred and fifty guineas three hun-"dred pounds sterling to the said John Dryden, "Esq. his executors, administrators, or assigns, at "the beginning of the second impression of the said "ten thousand verses.

"In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand "and seal, this 20th day of March, 169$\frac{8}{9}$.

"Jacob Tonson.

"Sealed and delivered, being
"first duly stampt, pursu-
"ant to the acts of parlia-
"ment for that purpose,
"in the presence of
"Ben. Portlock,
"Will. Congreve."

"March 24, 1698.

"Received then of Mr. Jacob Tonson the sum "of two hundred sixty-eight pounds fifteen shil-"lings,

"full as ready and patient to admit the reprehen-
"sions of others, in respect of his own oversights or
"mistakes."

To this account of Congreve nothing can be objected but the fondness of friendship; and to have excited that fondness in such a mind is no small degree of praise. The disposition of Dryden, however, is shewn in this character rather as it exhibited itself in cursory conversation, than as it operated on the more important parts of life. His placability and his friendship indeed were solid virtues; but courtesy and good-humour are often found with little real worth. Since Congreve, who knew him well, has told us no more, the rest must be collected as it can from other testimonies, and particularly from those notices which Dryden has very liberally given us of himself.

The modesty which made him so slow to advance, and so easy to be repulsed, was certainly no suspicion of deficient merit, or unconsciousness of his own value: he appears to have known, in its whole extent, the dignity of his own character, and to have set a very high value on his own powers and performances. He probably did not offer his conversation, because he expected it to be solicited; and he retired from a cold reception, not submissive but indignant, with such deference of his own greatness as made him unwilling to expose it to neglect or violation.

His modesty was by no means inconsistent with ostentatiousness; he is diligent enough to remind the world of his merit, and expresses with very little scruple his high opinion of his own powers; but his self-commendations are read without scorn or indignation; we allow his claims, and love his frankness.

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Tradition, however, has not allowed that his confidence in himſelf exempted him from jealouſy of others. He is accuſed of envy and inſidiouſneſs; and is particularly charged with inciting Creech to tranſlate Horace, that he might loſe the reputation which Lucretius had given him.

Of this charge we immediately diſcover that it is merely conjectural; the purpoſe was ſuch as no man would confeſs; and a crime that admits no proof, why ſhould we believe?

He has been deſcribed as magiſterially preſiding over the younger writers, and aſſuming the diſtribution of poetical fame; but he who excels has a right to teach, and he whoſe judgement is inconteſtible may without uſurpation examine and decide.

Congreve repreſents him as ready to adviſe and inſtruct; but there is reaſon to believe that his communication was rather uſeful than entertaining. He declares of himſelf that he was ſaturnine, and not one of thoſe whoſe ſprightly ſayings diverted company; and one of his cenſurers make him ſay,

> Nor wine nor love could ever ſee me gay;
> To writing bred, I knew not what to ſay.

There are men whoſe powers operate only at leiſure and in retirement, and whoſe intellectual vigour deſerts them in converſation; whom merriment confuſes, and objection diſconcerts; whoſe baſhfulneſs reſtrains their exertion, and ſuffers them not to ſpeak till the time of ſpeaking is paſt; or whoſe attention to their own character makes them unwilling to utter at hazard what has not been conſidered, and cannot be recalled.

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Of Dryden's ſluggiſhneſs in converſation it is vain to ſearch or to gueſs the cauſe. He certainly wanted neither ſentiments nor language; his intellectual treaſures were great, though they were locked up from his own uſe. "His thoughts," when he wrote, "flowed in upon him ſo faſt, that his only care was "which to chuſe, and which to reject." Such rapidity of compoſition naturally promiſes a flow of talk; yet we muſt be content to believe what an enemy ſays of him, when he likewiſe ſays it of himſelf. But, whatever was his character as a companion, it appears that he lived in familiarity with the higheſt perſons of his time. It is related by Carte of the Duke of Ormond, that he uſed often to paſs a night with Dryden, and thoſe with whom Dryden conſorted: who they were, Carte has not told, but certainly the convivial table at which Ormond ſat was not ſurrounded with a plebeian ſociety. He was indeed reproached with boaſting of his familiarity with the great: and Horace will ſupport him in the opinion, that to pleaſe ſuperiors is not the loweſt kind of merit.

The merit of pleaſing muſt, however, be eſtimated by the means. Favour is not always gained by good actions or laudable qualities. Careſſes and preferments are often beſtowed on the auxiliaries of vice, the procurers of pleaſure, or the flatterers of vanity. Dryden has never been charged with any perſonal agency unworthy of a good character: he abetted vice and vanity only with his pen. One of his enemies has accuſed him of lewdneſs in his converſation; but, if accuſation without proof be credited, who ſhall be innocent?

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His works afford too many examples of diſſolute licentiouſneſs, and abject adulation; but they were probably, like his merriment, artificial and conſtrained; the effects of ſtudy and meditation, and his trade rather than his pleaſure.

Of the mind that can trade in corruption, and can deliberately pollute itſelf with ideal wickedneſs for the ſake of ſpreading the contagion in ſociety, I wiſh not to conceal or excuſe the depravity.—Such degradation of the dignity of genius, ſuch abuſe of ſuperlative abilities, cannot be contemplated but with grief and indignation. What conſolation can be had, Dryden has afforded, by living to repent, and to teſtify his repentance.

Of dramatick immorality he did not want examples among his predeceſſors, or companions among his contemporaries; but, in the meanneſs and ſervility of hyperbolical adulation, I know not whether, ſince the days in which the Roman emperors were deified, he has been ever equalled, except by Afra Behn in an addreſs to Eleanor Gwyn. When once he has undertaken the taſk of praiſe, he no longer retains ſhame in himſelf, nor ſuppoſes it in his patron. As many odoriferous bodies are obſerved to diffuſe perfumes from year to year, without ſenſible diminution of bulk or weight, he appears never to have impoveriſhed his mint of flattery by his expences, however laviſh. He had all the forms of excellence, intellectual and moral, combined in his mind, with endleſs variation; and, when he had ſcattered on the hero of the day the golden ſhower of wit and virtue, he had ready for him, whom he wiſhed to court on the morrow, new wit and virtue with another ſtamp.

Of

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Of this kind of meanneſs he never ſeems to decline the practice, or lament the neceſſity: he conſiders the great as entitled to encomiaſtick homage, and brings praiſe rather as a tribute than a gift, more delighted with the fertility of his invention, than mortified by the proſtitution of his judgement. It is indeed not certain, that on theſe occaſions his judgement much rebelled againſt his intereſt. There are minds which eaſily ſink into ſubmiſſion, that look on grandeur with undiſtinguiſhing reverence, and diſcover no defect where there is elevation of rank and affluence of riches.

With his praiſes of others and of himſelf is always intermingled a ſtrain of diſcontent and lamentation, a ſullen growl of reſentment, or a querulous murmur of diſtreſs. His works are under-valued, his merit is unrewarded, and "he has few thanks to "pay his ſtars that he was born among Engliſhmen." To his criticks he is ſometimes contemptuous, ſometimes reſentful, and ſometimes ſubmiſſive. The writer who thinks his works formed for duration, miſtakes his intereſt when he mentions his enemies. He degrades his own dignity by ſhewing that he was affected by their cenſures, and gives laſting importance to names, which, left to themſelves, would vaniſh from remembrance. From this principle Dryden did not often depart; his complaints are for the greater part general; he ſeldom pollutes his page with an adverſe name. He condeſcended indeed to a controverſy with Settle, in which he perhaps may be conſidered rather as aſſaulting than repelling; and ſince Settle is ſunk into oblivion, his libel remains injurious only to himſelf.

Among

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Among anſwers to criticks, no poetical attacks, or altercations, are to be included; they are like other poems, effuſions of genius, produced as much to obtain praiſe as to obviate cenſure. Theſe Dryden practiſed, and in theſe he excelled.

Of Collier, Blackmore, and Milbourne, he has made mention in the Preface of his Fables. To the cenſure of Collier, whoſe remarks may be rather termed admonitions than criticiſms, he makes little reply; being, at the age of ſixty-eight, attentive to better things than the claps of a playhouſe. He complains of Collier's rudeneſs, and the "horſe-play of "his raillery;" and aſſerts, that "in many places he "has perverted by his gloſſes the meaning" of what he cenſures; but in other things he confeſſes that he is juſtly taxed; and ſays, with great calmneſs and candour, "I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts or "expreſſions of mine that can be truly accuſed of "obſcenity, immorality, or profaneneſs, and retract "them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; "if he be my friend, he will be glad of my re-"pentance." Yet as our beſt diſpoſitions are imperfect, he left ſtanding in the ſame book a reflection on Collier of great aſperity, and indeed of more aſperity than wit.

Blackmore he repreſents as made his enemy by the poem of *Abſalom and Achitophel*, which "he thinks a "little hard upon his fanatick patrons;" and charges him with borrowing the plan of his *Arthur* from the Preface to Juvenal, "though he had," ſays he, "the "baſeneſs not to acknowledge his benefactor, but "inſtead of it to traduce me in a libel."

The

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The libel in which Blackmore traduced him was a *Satire upon Wit*; in which, having lamented the exuberance of falſe wit and the deficiency of true, he propoſes that all wit ſhould be re-coined before it is current, and appoints maſters of aſſay who ſhall reject all that is light or debaſed.

'Tis true, that when the coarſe and worthleſs droſs
Is purg'd away, there will be mighty loſs:
Ev'n Congreve, Southern, manly Wycherly,
When thus refin'd, will grievous ſufferers be.
Into the melting pot when Dryden comes,
What horrid ſtench will riſe, what noiſome fumes!
How will he ſhrink, when all his lewd allay,
And wicked mixture, ſhall be purg'd away!

Thus ſtands the paſſage in the laſt edition; but in the original there was an abatement of the cenſure, beginning thus:

But what remains will be ſo pure, 'twill bear
Th' examination of the moſt ſevere.

Blackmore, finding the cenſure reſented, and the civility diſregarded, ungenerouſly omitted the ſofter part. Such variations diſcover a writer who conſults his paſſions more than his virtue; and it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed that Dryden imputes his enmity to its true cauſe.

Of Milbourne he wrote only in general terms, ſuch as are always ready at the call of anger, whether juſt or not: a ſhort extract will be ſufficient. "He "pretends a quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul "upon prieſthood; if I have, I am only to aſk par-"don of good prieſts, and am afraid his ſhare of "the reparation will come to little. Let him be "ſatiſ-

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"ſatisfied that he ſhall never be able to force himſelf "upon me for an adverſary; I contemn him too "much to enter into competition with him.

"As for the reſt of thoſe who have written againſt "me, they are ſuch ſcoundrels that they deſerve not "the leaſt notice to be taken of them. Blackmore "and Milbourne are only diſtinguiſhed from the "crowd by being remembered to their infamy."

Dryden indeed diſcovered, in many of his writings, an affected and abſurd malignity to prieſts and prieſthood, which naturally raiſed him many enemies, and which was ſometimes as unſeaſonably reſented as it was exerted. Trapp is angry that he calls the ſacrificer in the *Georgicks* "The Holy Butcher:" the tranſlation is not indeed ridiculous; but Trapp's anger ariſes from his zeal, not for the author, but the prieſt; as if any reproach of the follies of Paganiſm could be extended to the preachers of truth.

Dryden's diſlike of the prieſthood is imputed by Langbaine, and I think by Brown, to a repulſe which he ſuffered when he ſolicited ordination; but he denies, in the Preface to his Fables, that he ever deſigned to enter into the Church; and ſuch a denial he would not have hazarded, if he could have been convicted of falſehood.

Malevolence to the clergy is ſeldom at a great diſtance from irreverence of religion, and Dryden affords no exception to this obſervation. His writings exhibit many paſſages, which, with all the allowance that can be made for characters and occaſions, are ſuch as piety would not have admitted, and ſuch as may vitiate light and unprincipled minds. But there is no reaſon for ſuppoſing that he diſbelieved the

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"lings, in purſuance of an agreement for ten thou-
"ſand verſes, to be delivered by me to the ſaid Ja-
"cob Tonſon, whereof I have already delivered to
"him about ſeven thouſand five hundred, more or
"leſs; he the ſaid Jacob Tonſon being obliged to
"make up the foreſaid ſum of two hundred ſixty-
"eight pounds fifteen ſhillings three hundred pounds,
"at the beginning of the ſecond impreſſion of the
"foreſaid ten thouſand verſes;

"I ſay, received by me

"John Dryden.

"Witneſs, Charles Dryden."

Two hundred and fifty guineas, at 1*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* is 268*l.* 15*s.*

It is manifeſt, from the dates of this contract, that it relates to the volume of Fables, which contains about twelve thouſand verſes, and for which therefore the payment muſt have been afterwards enlarged.

I have been told of another letter yet remaining, in which he deſires Tonſon to bring him money, to pay for a watch which he had ordered for his ſon, and which the maker would not leave without the price.

The inevitable conſequence of poverty is dependence. Dryden had probably no recourſe in his exigences but to his bookſeller. The particular character of Tonſon I do not know; but the general conduct of traders was much leſs liberal in thoſe times than in our own; their views were narrower, and their manners groſſer. To the mercantile ruggedneſs of that race, the delicacy of the poet was ſometimes expoſed. Lord Bolingbroke, who in his youth

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youth had cultivated poetry, related to Dr. King of Oxford, that one day, when he visited Dryden, they heard, as they were conversing, another person entering the house. "This," said Dryden, "is Tonson. You will take care not to depart before he goes away: for I have not completed the sheet which I promised him; and if you leave me unprotected, I must suffer all the rudeness to which his resentment can prompt his tongue."

What rewards he obtained for his poems, besides the payment of the bookseller, cannot be known. Mr. Derrick, who consulted some of his relations, was informed that his Fables obtained five hundred pounds from the Dutchess of Ormond; a present not unsuitable to the mgnificence of that splendid family; and he quotes Moyle, as relating that forty pounds were paid by a musical society for the use of *Alexander's Feast*.

In those days the œconomy of government was yet unsettled, and the payments of the Exchequer were dilatory and uncertain; of this disorder there is reason to believe that the Laureat sometimes felt the effects; for, in one of his Prefaces he complains of those, who, being intrusted with the distribution of the Prince's bounty, suffer those that depend upon it to languish in penury.

Of his petty habits or slight amusements, tradition has retained little. Of the only two men whom I have found to whom he was personally known, one told me, that at the house which he frequented, called Will's Coffee-house, the appeal upon any literary dispute was made to him: and the other related, that his armed chair, which in the winter had a settled

and

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and prescriptive place by the fire, was in the summer placed in the balcony, and that he called the two places his winter and his summer seat. This is all the intelligence which his two survivors afforded me.

One of his opinions will do him no honour in the present age, though in his own time, at least in the beginning of it, he was far from having it confined to himself. He put great confidence in the prognostications of judicial astrology. In the Appendix to the Life of Congreve is a narrative of some of his predictions wonderfully fulfilled; but I know not the writer's means of information, or character of veracity. That he had the configurations of the horoscope in his mind, and considered them as influencing the affairs of men, he does not forbear to hint.

> The utmost malice of the stars is past.—
> Now frequent *trines* the happier lights among,
> And *high-rais'd Jove*, from his dark prison freed,
> Those weights took off that on his planet hung,
> Will gloriously the new-laid works succeed.

He has elsewhere shewn his attention to the planetary powers; and in the preface to his Fables has endeavoured obliquely to justify his superstition by attributing the same to some of the Ancients. The latter, added to this narrative, leaves no doubt of his notions or practice.

So slight and so scanty is the knowledge which I have been able to collect concerning the private life and domestick manners of a man whom every English generation must mention with reverence as a critick and a poet.

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DRYDEN may be properly confidered as the father of Englifh criticifm, as the writer who firft taught us to determine upon principles the merit of compofition. Of our former poets, the greateft dramatift wrote without rules, conducted through life and nature by a genius that rarely mifled, and rarely deferted him. Of the reft, thofe who knew the laws of propriety had neglected to teach them.

Two *Arts of Englifh Poetry* were written in the days of Elizabeth by Webb and Puttenham, from which fomething might be learned, and a few hints had been given by Jonfon and Cowley; but Dryden's *Effay on Dramatick Poetry* was the firft regular and valuable treatife on the art of writing.

He who, having formed his opinions in the prefent age of Englifh literature, turns back to perufe this dialogue, will not perhaps find much increafe of knowledge, or much novelty of inftruction; but he is to remember that critical principles were then in the hands of a few, who had gathered them partly from the Ancients, and partly from the Italians and French. The ftructure of dramatick poems was then not generally underftood. Audiences applauded by inftinct; and poets perhaps often pleafed by chance.

A writer who obtains his full purpofe lofes himfelf in his own luftre. Of an opinion which is no longer doubted, the evidence ceafes to be examined. Of an art univerfally practifed, the firft teacher is forgotten. Learning once made popular is no longer learning; it has the appearance of fomething which we have beftowed upon ourfelves, as the dew appears to rife from the field which it refrefhes.

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To judge rightly of an author, we muſt tranſport ourſelves to his time, and examine what were the wants of his contemporaries, and what were his means of ſupplying them. That which is eaſy at one time was difficult at another. Dryden at leaſt imported his ſcience, and gave his country what it wanted before; or rather, he imported only the materials, and manufactured them by his own ſkill.

The Dialogue on the Drama was one of his firſt eſſays of criticiſm, written when he was yet a timorous candidate for reputation, and therefore laboured with that diligence which he might allow himſelf ſomewhat to remit, when his name gave ſanction to his poſitions, and his awe of the publick was abated, partly by cuſtom, and partly by ſucceſs. It will not be eaſy to find, in all the opulence of our language, a treatiſe ſo artfully variegated with ſucceſſive repreſentations of oppoſite probabilities, ſo enlivened with imagery, ſo brightened with illuſtrations. His portraits of the Engliſh dramatiſts are wrought with great ſpirit and diligence. The account of Shakſpeare may ſtand as a perpetual model of encomiaſtick criticiſm; exact without minuteneſs, and lofty without exaggeration. The praiſe laviſhed by Longinus, on the atteſtation of the heroes of Marathon, by Demoſthenes, fades away before it. In a few lines is exhibited a character, ſo extenſive in its comprehenſion, and ſo curious in its limitations, that nothing can be added, diminiſhed, or reformed; nor can the editors and admirers of Shakſpeare, in all their emulation of reverence, boaſt of much more than of having diffuſed and paraphraſed this epitome

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of excellence, of having changed Dryden's gold for baſer metal, of lower value, though of greater bulk.

In this, and in all his other eſſays on the ſame ſubject, the criticiſm of Dryden is the criticiſm of a poet; not a dull collection of theorems, nor a rude detection of faults, which perhaps the cenſor was not able to have committed; but a gay and vigorous diſſertation, where delight is mingled with inſtruction, and where the author proves his right of judgement by his power of performance.

The different manner and effect with which critical knowledge may be conveyed, was perhaps never more clearly exemplified than in the performances of Rymer and Dryden. It was ſaid of a diſpute between two mathematicians, "malim cum Scaligero errare, quam cum Clavio rectè ſapere;" that "it was more eligible to go wrong with one, than right with the other." A tendency of the ſame kind every mind muſt feel at the peruſal of Dryden's prefaces and Rymer's diſcourſes. With Dryden we are wandering in queſt of Truth; whom we find, if we find her at all, dreſt in the graces of elegance; and, if we miſs her, the labour of the purſuit rewards itſelf; we are led only through fragrance and flowers. Rymer, without taking a nearer, takes a rougher way; every ſtep is to be made through thorns and brambles; and Truth, if we meet her, appears repulſive by her mien, and ungraceful by her habit. Dryden's criticiſm has the majeſty of a queen; Rymer's has the ferocity of a tyrant.

As

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As he had ſtudied with great diligence the art of Poetry, and enlarged or rectified his notions, by experience perpetually increaſing, he had his mind ſtored with principles and obſervations; he poured out his knowledge with little labour; for of labour, notwithſtanding the multiplicity of his productions, there is ſufficient reaſon to ſuſpect that he was not a lover. To write *con amore*, with fondneſs for the employment, with perpetual touches and retouches, with unwillingneſs to take leave of his own idea, and an unwearied purſuit of unattainable perfection, was, I think, no part of his character.

His criticiſm may be conſidered as general or occaſional. In his general precepts, which depend upon the nature of things, and the ſtructure of the human mind, he may doubtleſs be ſafely recommended to the confidence of the reader; but his occaſional and particular poſitions were ſometimes intereſted, ſometimes negligent, and ſometimes capricious. It is not without reaſon that Trapp, ſpeaking of the praiſes which he beſtows on Palamon and Arcite, ſays, "Novimus judicium Drydeni de poemate quodam *Chauceri*, pulchro ſane illo, & admodum laudando, nimirum quod non modo vere epicum ſit, ſed Iliada etiam atque Æneada æquet, imo ſuperet. Sed novimus eodem tempore viri illius maximi non ſemper accuratiſſimas eſſe cenſuras, nec ad ſeveriſſimam critices normam exactas: illo judice id plerumque optimum eſt, quod nunc præ manibus habet, & in quo nunc occupatur."

He is therefore by no means conſtant to himſelf. His defence and deſertion of dramatick rhyme is

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generally known. *Spence*, in his remarks on Pope's Odyſſey, produces what he thinks an unconquerable quotation from Dryden's preface to the Æneid, in favour of tranſlating an epick poem into blank verſe; but he forgets that when his author attempted the Iliad, ſome years afterwards, he departed from his own deciſion, and tranſlated into rhyme.

When he has any objection to obviate, or any licence to defend, he is not very ſcrupulous about what he aſſerts, nor very cautious, if the preſent purpoſe be ſerved, not to entangle himſelf in his own ſophiſtries. But, when all arts are exhauſted, like other hunted animals, he ſometimes ſtands at bay; when he cannot diſown the groſsneſs of one of his plays, he declares that he knows not any law that preſcribes morality to a comick poet.

His remarks on ancient or modern writers are not always to be truſted. His parallel of the verſification of Ovid with that of Claudian has been very juſtly cenſured by *Sewel* *. His compariſon of the firſt line of Virgil with the firſt of Statius is not happier. Virgil, he ſays, is ſoft and gentle, and would have thought Statius mad, if he had heard him thundering out

Quæ ſuperimpoſito moles geminata coloſſo.

Statius perhaps heats himſelf, as he proceeds, to exaggeration ſomewhat hyperbolical; but undoubtedly Virgil would have been too haſty, if he had condemned him to ſtraw for one ſounding line.

* Preface to Ovid's Metamorphoſes. Dr. J.

Dryden

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Dryden wanted an inſtance, and the firſt that occurred was impreſt into the ſervice.

What he wiſhes to ſay, he ſays at hazard; he cited *Gorbuduc*, which he had never ſeen; gives a falſe account of *Chapman's* verſification; and diſcovers, in the preface to his Fables, that he tranſlated the firſt book of the Iliad without knowing what was in the ſecond.

It will be difficult to prove that Dryden ever made any great advances in literature. As having diſtinguiſhed himſelf at Weſtminſter under the tuition of Buſby, who advanced his ſcholars to a height of knowledge very rarely attained in grammar-ſchools, he reſided afterwards at Cambridge; it is not to be ſuppoſed, that his ſkill in the ancient languages was deficient, compared with that of common ſtudents; but his ſcholaſtic acquiſitions ſeem not proportionate to his opportunities and abilities. He could not, like Milton or Cowley, have made his name illuſtrious merely by his learning. He mentions but few books, and thoſe ſuch as lie in the beaten track of regular ſtudy; from which if ever he departs, he is in danger of loſing himſelf in unknown regions.

In his Dialogue on the Drama, he pronounces with great confidence that the Latin tragedy of Medea is not Ovid's, becauſe it is not ſufficiently intereſting and pathetick. He might have determined the queſtion upon ſurer evidence; for it is quoted by Quintilian as the work of Seneca; and the only line which remains in Ovid's play, for one line is left us, is not there to be found. There was therefore no need of the gravity of conjecture, or the

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diſcuſſion of plot or ſentiment, to find what was already known upon higher authority than ſuch diſcuſſions can ever reach.

His literature, though not always free from oſtentation, will be commonly found either obvious, and made his own by the art of dreſſing it; or ſuperficial, which, by what he gives, ſhews what he wanted; or erroneous, haſtily collected, and negligently ſcattered.

Yet it cannot be ſaid that his genius is ever unprovided of matter, or that his fancy languiſhes in penury of ideas. His works abound with knowledge, and ſparkle with illuſtrations. There is ſcarcely any ſcience or faculty that does not ſupply him with occaſional images and lucky ſimilitudes; every page diſcovers a mind very widely acquainted both with art and nature, and in full poſſeſſion of great ſtores of intellectual wealth. Of him that knows much it is natural to ſuppoſe that he has read with diligence: yet I rather believe that the knowledge of Dryden was gleaned from accidental intelligence and various converſation, by a quick apprehenſion, a judicious ſelection, and a happy memory, a keen appetite of knowledge, and a powerful digeſtion; by vigilance that permitted nothing to paſs without notice, and a habit of reflection that ſuffered nothing uſeful to be loſt. A mind like Dryden's, always curious, always active, to which every underſtanding was proud to be aſſociated, and of which every one ſolicited the regard, by an ambitious diſplay of himſelf, had a more pleaſant, perhaps a nearer way to knowledge than by the ſilent progreſs of ſolitary reading. I do not ſuppoſe that he

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he despised books, or intentionally neglected them; but that he was carried out, by the impetuosity of his genius, to more vivid and speedy instructors; and that his studies were rather desultory and fortuitous than constant and systematical.

It must be confessed that he scarcely ever appears to want book-learning but when he mentions books; and to him may be transferred the praise which he gives his master Charles;

His conversation, wit, and parts,
His knowledge in the noblest useful arts,
Were such, dead authors could not give,
But habitudes of those that live:
Who, lighting him, did greater lights receive;
He drain'd from all, and all they knew,
His apprehensions quick, his judgement true;
That the most learn'd with shame confess,
His knowledge more, his reading only less.

Of all this, however, if the proof be demanded, I will not undertake to give it; the atoms of probability, of which my opinion has been formed, lie scattered over all his works; and by him who thinks the question worth his notice, his works must be perused with very close attention.

Criticism, either didactick or defensive, occupies almost all his prose, except those pages which he has devoted to his patrons; but none of his prefaces were ever thought tedious. They have not the formality of a settled style, in which the first half of the sentence betrays the other. The clauses are never balanced, nor the periods modelled: every word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper

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proper place. Nothing is cold or languid: the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous; what is little, is gay; what is great, is ſplendid. He may be thought to mention himſelf too frequently; but, while he forces himſelf upon our eſteem, we cannot refuſe him to ſtand high in his own. Every thing is excuſed by the play of images, and the ſprightlineſs of expreſſion. Though all is eaſy, nothing is feeble; though all ſeems careleſs, there is nothing harſh; and though, ſince his earlier works more than a century has paſſed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obſolete.

He who writes much will not eaſily eſcape a manner, ſuch a recurrence of particular modes as may be eaſily noted. Dryden is always *another and the ſame*; he does not exhibit a ſecond time the ſame elegances in the ſame form, nor appears to have any art other than that of expreſſing with clearneſs what he thinks with vigour. His ſtyle could not eaſily be imitated, either ſeriouſly or ludicrouſly; for, being always equable and always varied, it has no prominent or diſcriminative characters. The beauty who is totally free from diſproportion of parts and features cannot be ridiculed by an overcharged reſemblance.

From his proſe, however, Dryden derives only his accidental and ſecondary praiſe; the veneration with which his name is pronounced by every cultivator of Engliſh literature, is paid to him as he refined the language, improved the ſentiments, and tuned the numbers, of Engliſh Poetry.

After about half a century of forced thoughts, and rugged metre, ſome advances towards nature and

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and harmony had been already made by Waller and Denham; they had ſhewn that long diſcourſes in rhyme grew more pleaſing when they were broken into couplets, and that verſe conſiſted not only in the number but the arrangement of ſyllables.

But though they did much, who can deny that they left much to do? Their works were not many, nor were their minds of very ample comprehenſion. More examples of more modes of compoſition were neceſſary for the eſtabliſhment of regularity, and the introduction of propriety in word and thought.

Every language of a learned nation neceſſarily divides itſelf into diction ſcholaſtick and popular, grave and familiar, elegant and groſs; and from a nice diſtinction of theſe different parts ariſes a great part of the beauty of ſtyle. But, if we except a few minds, the favourites of nature, to whom their own original rectitude was in the place of rules, this delicacy of ſelection was little known to our authors; our ſpeech lay before them in a heap of confuſion; and every man took for every purpoſe what chance might offer him.

There was therefore before the time of Dryden no poetical diction, no ſyſtem of words at once refined from the groſſneſs of domeſtick uſe, and free from the harſhneſs of terms appropriated to particular arts. Words too familiar, or too remote, defeat the purpoſe of a poet. From thoſe ſounds which we hear on ſmall or on coarſe occaſions, we do not eaſily receive ſtrong impreſſions, or delightful images; and words to which we are nearly ſtrangers, whenever they occur, draw that attention on themſelves which they ſhould tranſmit to things.

Thoſe

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Thoſe happy combinations of words which diſtinguiſh poetry from proſe had been rarely attempted: we had few elegances or flowers of ſpeech; the roſes had not yet been plucked from the bramble, or different colours had not been joined to enliven one another.

It may be doubted whether Waller and Denham could have over-born the prejudices which had long prevailed, and which even then were ſheltered by the protection of Cowley. The new verſification, as it was called, may be conſidered as owing its eſtabliſhment to Dryden; from whoſe time it is apparent that Engliſh poetry has had no tendency to relapſe to its former ſavageneſs.

The affluence and comprehenſion of our language is very illuſtriouſly diſplayed in our poetical tranſlations of Ancient Writers; a work which the French ſeem to relinquiſh in deſpair, and which we were long unable to peform with dexterity. Ben Jonſon thought it neceſſary to copy Horace almoſt word by word; Feltham, his contemporary and adverſary, conſiders it as indiſpenſably requiſite in a tranſlation to give line for line. It is ſaid that Sandys, whom Dryden calls the beſt verſifier of the laſt age, has ſtruggled hard to compriſe every book of the Engliſh Metamorphoſes in the ſame number of verſes with the original. Holyday had nothing in view but to ſhew that he underſtood his author, with ſo little regard to the grandeur of his diction, or the volubility of his numbers, that his metres can hardly be called verſes; they cannot be read without reluctance, nor will the labour always be rewarded by underſtanding them. Cowley ſaw that ſuch copyers were

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were a ſervile race; he aſſerted his liberty, and ſpread his wings ſo boldly that he left his authors. It was reſerved for Dryden to fix the limits of poetical liberty, and give us juſt rules and examples of tranſlation.

When languages are formed upon different principles, it is impoſſible that the ſame modes of expreſſion ſhould always be elegant in both. While they run on together, the cloſeſt tranſlation may be conſidered as the beſt; but when they divaricate, each muſt take its natural courſe. Where correſpondence cannot be obtained, it is neceſſary to be content with ſomething equivalent. "Tranſlation there-"fore," ſays Dryden, "is not ſo looſe as paraphraſe, "nor ſo cloſe as metaphraſe."

All poliſhed languages have different ſtyles; the conciſe, the diffuſe, the lofty, and the humble. In the proper choice of ſtyle conſiſts the reſemblance which Dryden principally exacts from the tranſlator. He is to exhibit his author's thoughts in ſuch a dreſs of diction as the author would have given them, had his language been Engliſh: rugged magnificence is not to be ſoftened; hyperbolical oſtentation is not to be repreſſed; nor ſententious affectation to have its point blunted. A tranſlator is to be like his author; it is not his buſineſs to excel him.

The reaſonableneſs of theſe rules ſeems ſufficient for their vindication; and the effects produced by obſerving them were ſo happy, that I know not whether they were ever oppoſed but by Sir Edward Sherburne, a man whoſe learning was greater than his powers of poetry, and who, being better quali-

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fied to give the meaning than the ſpirit of Seneca; has introduced his verſion of three tragedies by a defence of cloſe tranſlation. The authority of Horace, which the new tranſlators cited in defence of their practice, he has, by a judicious explanation, taken fairly from them; but reaſon wants not Horace to ſupport it.

It ſeldom happens that all the neceſſary cauſes concur to any great effect: will is wanting to power, or power to will, or both are impeded by external obſtructions. The exigences in which Dryden was condemned to paſs his life are reaſonably ſuppoſed to have blaſted his genius, to have driven out his works in a ſtate of immaturity, and to have intercepted the full-blown elegance which longer growth would have ſupplied.

Poverty, like other rigid powers, is ſometimes too haſtily accuſed. If the excellence of Dryden's works was leſſened by his indigence, their number was increaſed; and I know not how it will be proved, that if he had written leſs he would have written better; or that indeed he would have undergone the toil of an author, if he had not been ſolicited by ſomething more preſſing than the love of praiſe.

But, as is ſaid by his Sebaſtian,

> What had been, is unknown; what is, appears.

We know that Dryden's ſeveral productions were ſo many ſucceſſive expedients for his ſupport; his plays were therefore often borrowed; and his poems were almoſt all occaſional.

In an occaſional performance no height of excellence can be expected from any mind, however fertile

tile in itſelf, and however ſtored with acquiſitions. He whoſe work is general and arbitrary has the choice of his matter, and takes that which his inclination and his ſtudies have beſt qualified him to diſplay and decorate. He is at liberty to delay his publication till he has ſatisfied his friends and himſelf, till he has reformed his firſt thoughts by ſubſequent examination, and poliſhed away thoſe faults which the precipitance of ardent compoſition is likely to leave behind it. Virgil is related to have poured out a great number of lines in the morning, and to have paſſed the day in reducing them to fewer.

The occaſional poet is circumſcribed by the narrowneſs of his ſubject. Whatever can happen to man has happened ſo often that little remains for fancy or invention. We have been all born; we have moſt of us been married; and ſo many have died before us, that our deaths can ſupply but few materials for a poet. In the fate of Princes the publick has an intereſt; and what happens to them of good or evil, the poets have always conſidered as buſineſs for the Muſe. But after ſo many inauguratory gratulations, nuptial hymns, and funeral dirges, he muſt be highly favoured by nature, or by fortune, who ſays any thing not ſaid before. Even war and conqueſt, however ſplendid, ſuggeſt no new images; the triumphant chariot of a victorious monarch can be decked only with thoſe ornaments that have graced his predeceſſors.

Not only matter but time is wanting. The poem muſt not be delayed till the occaſion is forgotten. The lucky moments of animated imagination cannot be attended; elegances and illuſtrations cannot be mul-

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multiplied by gradual accumulation; the compoſition muſt be diſpatched, while converſation is yet buſy, and admiration freſh; and haſte is to be made, leſt ſome other event ſhould lay hold upon mankind.

Occaſional compoſitions may however ſecure to a writer the praiſe both of learning and facility; for they cannot be the effect of long ſtudy, and muſt be furniſhed immediately from the treaſures of the mind.

The death of Cromwell was the firſt publick event which called forth Dryden's poetical powers. His heroick ſtanzas have beauties and defects; the thoughts are vigorous, and, though not always proper, ſhew a mind replete with ideas; the numbers are ſmooth; and the diction, if not altogether correct, is elegant end eaſy.

Davenant was perhaps at this time his favourite author, though Gondibert never appears to have been popular; and from Davenant he learned to pleaſe his ear with the ſtanza of four lines alternately rhymed.

Dryden very early formed his verſification; there are in this early production no traces of Donne's or Jonſon's ruggedneſs; but he did not ſo ſoon free his mind from the ambition of forced conceits. In his verſes on the Reſtoration, he ſays of the King's exile,

He, toſs'd by Fate—
Could taſte no ſweets of youth's deſir'd age,
But found his life too true a pilgrimage.

And afterwards, to ſhew how virtue and wiſdom are increaſed by adverſity, he makes this remark:

Well

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Well might the antient poets then confer
On Night the honour'd name of *counsellor*,
Since, struck with rays of prosperous fortune blind,
We light alone in dark afflictions find.

His praise of Monk's dexterity comprises such a cluster of thoughts unallied to one another, as will not elsewhere be easily found:

'Twas Monk, whom Providence design'd to loose
Those real bonds false freedom did impose.
The blessed saints that watch'd this turning scene
Did from their stars with joyful wonder lean,
To see small clues draw vastest weights along,
Not in their bulk, but in their order strong.
Thus pencils can by one slight touch restore
Smiles to that changed face that wept before.
With ease such fond chimæras we pursue,
As fancy frames, for fancy to subdue:
But, when ourselves to action we betake,
It shuns the mint like gold that chemists make.
How hard was then his task, at once to be
What in the body natural we see!
Man's Architect distinctly did ordain
The charge of muscles, nerves, and of the brain,
Through viewless conduits spirits to dispense
The springs of motion from the seat of sense:
'Twas not the hasty product of a day,
But the well-ripen'd fruit of wise delay.
He, like a patient angler, ere he strook,
Would let them play awhile upon the hook.
Our healthful food the stomach labours thus,
At first embracing what it strait doth crush.
Wise leaches will not vain receipts obtrude,
While growing pains pronounce the humours crude;
Deaf to complaints, they wait upon the ill,
Till some safe crisis authorize their skill.

He had not yet learned, indeed he never learned well, to forbear the improper uſe of mythology. After having rewarded the Heathen deities for their care,

With Alga who the ſacred altar ſtrows?
To all the ſea-gods Charles an offering owes;
A bull to thee, Portunus, ſhall be ſlain;
A ram to you, ye Tempeſts of the Main.

He tells us, in the language of Religion,

Prayer ſtorm'd the ſkies, and raviſh'd Charles from thence,
As Heaven itſelf is took by violence.

And afterwards mentions one of the moſt awful paſſages of Sacred Hiſtory.

Other conceits there are, too curious to be quite omitted; as,

For by example moſt we ſinn'd before,
And, glaſs-like, clearneſs mix'd with frailty bore.

How far he was yet from thinking it neceſſary to found his ſentiments on nature, appears from the extravagance of his fictions and hyperboles:

The winds, that never moderation knew,
Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew;
Or, out of breath with joy, could not enlarge
Their ſtraiten'd lungs.—
It is no longer motion cheats your view;
As you meet it, the land approacheth you;
The land returns, and in the white it wears
The marks of penitence, and ſorrow bears.

I know

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I know not whether this fancy, however little be its value, was not borrowed. A French poet read to Malherbe ſome verſes, in which he repreſents France as moving out of its place to receive the king. "Though this," ſaid Malherbe, "was in my time, "I do not remember it."

His poem on the *Coronation* has a more even tenor of thought. Some lines deſerve to be quoted.

You have already quench'd ſedition's brand;
And zeal, that burnt it, only warms the land;
The jealous ſects that durſt not truſt their cauſe,
So far from their own will as to the laws,
Him for their umpire and their ſynod take,
And their appeal alone to Cæſar make.

Here may be found one particle of that old verſification, of which, I believe, in all his works, there is not another:

Nor is it duty, or our hope alone,
Creates that joy, but full *fruition*.

In the verſes to the Lord Chancellor Clarendon, two years afterwards, is a conceit ſo hopeleſs at the firſt view, that few would have attempted it; and ſo ſucceſsfully laboured, that though at laſt it gives the reader more perplexity than pleaſure, and ſeems hardly worth the ſtudy that it coſts, yet it muſt be valued as a proof of a mind at once ſubtle and comprehenſive;

In open proſpect nothing bounds our eye,
Until the earth ſeems join'd unto the ſky:
So in this hemiſphere our utmoſt view
Is only bounded by our king and you:

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Our ſight is limited where you are join'd,
And beyond that no farther Heaven can find.
So well your virtues do with his agree,
That though your orbs of different greatneſs be,
Yet both are for each other's uſe diſpos'd,
His to encloſe, and yours to be enclos'd.
Nor could another in your room have been,
Except an emptineſs had come between.

The compariſon of the Chancellor to the Indies leaves all reſemblance too far behind it:

And as the Indies were not found before
Thoſe rich perfumes which from the happy ſhore
The winds upon their balmy wings convey'd,
Whoſe guilty ſweetneſs firſt their world betray'd;
So by your counſels we are brought to view
A new and undiſcover'd world in you.

There is another compariſon, for there is little elſe in the poem, of which, though perhaps it cannot be explained into plain proſaick meaning, the mind perceives enough to be delighted, and readily forgives its obſcurity, for its magnificence:

How ſtrangely active are the arts of peace,
Whoſe reſtleſs motions leſs than wars do ceaſe!
Peace is not freed from labour, but from noiſe;
And war more force, but not more pains employs.
Such is the mighty ſwiftneſs of your mind,
That, like the Earth's, it leaves our ſenſe behind;
While you ſo ſmoothly turn and roll our ſphere,
That rapid motion does but reſt appear.
For as in nature's ſwiftneſs, with the throng
Of flying orbs while ours is borne along,
All ſeems at reſt to the deluded eye,
Mov'd by the ſoul of the ſame harmony:

Soy

So, carry'd on by your unwearied care,
We reſt in peace, and yet in motion ſhare.

To this ſucceed four lines, which perhaps afford Dryden's firſt attempt at thoſe penetrating remarks on human nature, for which he ſeems to have been peculiarly formed:

Let envy then thoſe crimes within you ſee,
From which the happy never muſt be free;
Envy, that does with miſery reſide,
The joy and the revenge of ruin'd pride.

Into this poem he ſeems to have collected all his powers; and after this he did not often bring upon his anvil ſuch ſtubborn and unmalleable thoughts: but, as a ſpecimen of his abilities to unite the moſt unſociable matter, he has concluded with lines of which I think not myſelf obliged to tell the meaning.

Yet unimpair'd with labours, or with time,
Your age but ſeems to a new youth to climb.
Thus heavenly bodies do our time beget,
And meaſure change, but ſhare no part of it;
And ſtill it ſhall without a weight increaſe,
Like this new year, whoſe motions never ceaſe.
For ſince the glorious courſe you have begun
Is led by Charles, as that is by the ſun,
It muſt both weightleſs and immortal prove,
Becauſe the centre of it is above.

In the *Annus Mirabilis* he returned to the quatrain, which from that time he totally quitted, perhaps from experience of its inconvenience, for he complains of its difficulty. This is one of his greateſt attempts. He had ſubjects equal to his abi-

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lities, a great naval war, and the Fire of London. Battles have always been deſcribed in heroick poetry; but a ſea-fight and artillery had yet ſomething of novelty. New arts are long in the world before poets deſcribe them; for they borrow every thing from their predeceſſors, and commonly derive very little from nature or from life. Boileau was the firſt French writer that had ever hazarded in verſe the mention of modern war, or the effects of gunpowder. We, who are leſs afraid of novelty, had already poſſeſſion of thoſe dreadful images. Waller had deſcribed a ſea-fight. Milton had not yet transferred the invention of fire-arms to the rebellious angels.

This poem is written with great diligence, yet does not fully anſwer the expectation raiſed by ſuch ſubjects and ſuch a writer. With the ſtanza of Davenant he has ſometimes his vein of parentheſis, and incidental diſquiſition, and ſtops his narrative for a wiſe remark.

The general fault is, that he affords more ſentiment than deſcription, and does not ſo much impreſs ſcenes upon the fancy, as deduce conſequences and make compariſons.

The initial ſtanzas have rather too much reſemblance to the firſt lines of Waller's poem on the war with Spain; perhaps ſuch a beginning is natural, and could not be avoided without affectation. Both Waller and Dryden might take their hint from the poem on the civil war of Rome, "Orbem jam "totum," &c.

Of the king collecting his navy, he ſays,

It ſeems, as every ſhip their ſovereign knows,
His awful ſummons they ſo ſoon obey:

So

So hear the ſcaly herds when Proteus blows,
And ſo to paſture follow through the ſea.

It would not be hard to believe that Dryden had written the two firſt lines ſeriouſly, and that ſome wag had added the two latter in burleſque. Who would expect the lines that immediately follow, which are indeed perhaps indecently hyperbolical, but certainly in a mode totally different?

To ſee this fleet upon the ocean move,
Angels drew wide the curtains of the ſkies;
And Heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
For tapers made two glaring comets riſe.

The deſcription of the attempt at Bergen will afford a very complete ſpecimen of the deſcriptions in this poem:

And now approach'd their fleet from India, fraught
With all the riches of the riſing ſun:
And precious ſand from Southern climates brought,
The fatal regions where the war begun.

Like hunted caſtors, conſcious of their ſtore,
Their way-laid wealth to Norway's coaſt they bring:
Then firſt the North's cold boſom ſpices bore,
And winter brooded on the Eaſtern ſpring.

By the rich ſcent we found our perfum'd prey,
Which, flank'd with rocks, did cloſe in covert lie;
And round about their murdering cannon lay,
At once to threaten and invite the eye.

Fiercer than cannon, and than rocks more hard,
The Engliſh undertake th' unequal war:
Seven ſhips alone, by which the port is barr'd,
Beſiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare.

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These fight like husbands, but like lovers those:
These fain would keep, and those more fain enjoy:
And to such height their frantick passion grows,
That what both love, both hazard to destroy:

Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,
And now their odours arm'd against them fly:
Some preciously by shatter'd porcelain fall,
And some by aromatick splinters die;

And, though by tempests of the prize bereft,
In Heaven's inclemency some ease we find;
Our foes we vanquish'd by our valour left,
And only yielded to the seas and wind.

In this manner is the sublime too often mingled with the ridiculous. The Dutch seek a shelter for a wealthy fleet: this surely needed no illustration; yet they must fly, not like all the rest of mankind on the same occasion, but "like hunted castors;" and they might with strict propriety be hunted; for we winded them by our noses—their *perfumes* betrayed them. The *Husband* and the *Lover*, though of more dignity than the castor, are images too domestick to mingle properly with the horrors of war. The two quatrains that follow are worthy of the author.

The account of the different sensations with which the two fleets retired, when the night parted them, is one of the fairest flowers of English poetry:

The night comes on, we eager to pursue
The combat still, and they asham'd to leave;
Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew,
And doubtful moon-light did our rage deceive.

In

In th' Engliſh fleet each ſhip reſounds with joy,
And loud applauſe of their great leader's fame:
In fiery dreams the Dutch they ſtill deſtroy,
And, ſlumbering, ſmile at the imagin'd flame.

Not ſo the Holland fleet, who, tir'd and done,
Stretch'd on their decks, like weary oxen lie;
Faint ſweats all down their mighty members run,
(Vaſt bulks, which little ſouls but ill ſupply).

In dreams they fearful precipices tread,
Or, ſhipwreck'd, labour to ſome diſtant ſhore:
Or, in dark churches, walk among the dead;
They wake with horror, and dare ſleep no more.

It is a general rule in poetry, that all appropriated terms of art ſhould be ſunk in general expreſſions, becauſe poetry is to ſpeak an univerſal language. This rule is ſtill ſtronger with regard to arts not liberal, or confined to few, and therefore far removed from common knowledge; and of this kind, certainly, is technical navigation. Yet Dryden was of opinion, that a ſea-fight ought to be deſcribed in the nautical language; "and certainly," ſays he, "as thoſe, "who in a logical diſputation keep to general terms, "would hide a fallacy, ſo thoſe who do it in poetical "deſcription would veil their ignorance."

Let us then appeal to experience; for by experience at laſt we learn as well what will pleaſe as what will profit. In the battle, his terms ſeem to have been blown away; but he deals them liberally in the dock:

So here ſome pick out bullets from the ſide,
Some drive old *okum* thro' each *ſeam* and rift:
Their left-hand does the *calking-iron* guide,
The rattling *mallet* with the right they lift.

With

With boiling pitch another near at hand
(From friendly Sweden brought) the *ſeams in-ſlops*;
Which, well laid o'er, the ſalt-ſea waves withſtand,
And ſhake them from the riſing beak in drops.

Some the *gall'd* ropes with dawby *marling* bind,
Or ſear-cloth maſts with ſtrong *tarpawling* coats:
To try new *ſhrouds* one mounts into the wind,
And one below their eaſe or ſtiffneſs notes.

I ſuppoſe there is not one term which every reader does not wiſh away.

His digreſſion to the original and progreſs of navigation, with his proſpect of the advancement which it ſhall receive from the Royal Society, then newly inſtituted, may be conſidered as an example ſeldom equalled of ſeaſonable excurſion and artful return.

One line, however, leaves me diſcontented; he ſays, that, by the help of the philoſophers,

Inſtructed ſhips ſhall ſail to quick commerce,
By which remoteſt regions are allied.—

Which he is conſtrained to explain in a note "by a "more exact meaſure of longitude." It had better become Dryden's learning and genius to have laboured ſcience into poetry, and have ſhewn, by explaining longitude, that verſe did not refuſe the ideas of philoſophy.

His deſcription of the Fire is painted by reſolute meditation, out of a mind better formed to reaſon than to feel. The conflagration of a city, with all its tumults of concomitant diſtreſs, is one of the moſt dreadful ſpectacles which this world can offer to human eyes; yet it ſeems to raiſe little emotion in the breaſt of the poet; he watches the flame coolly from

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from ſtreet to ſtreet, with now a reflection, and now a ſimile, till at laſt he meets the King, for whom he makes a ſpeech, rather tedious in a time ſo buſy; and then follows again the progreſs of the fire.

There are, however, in this part ſome paſſages that deſerve attention; as in the beginning;

> The diligence of trades and noiſeful gain,
> And luxury, more late aſleep was laid!
> All was the Night's, and in her ſilent reign
> No ſound the reſt of Nature did invade
> In this deep quiet——

The expreſſion "All was the Night's" is taken from Seneca, who remarks on Virgil's line,

> *Omnia noctis erant, placida compoſita quiete,*

that he might have concluded better,

> *Omnia noctis erant.*

The following quatrain is vigorous and animated;

> The ghoſts of traitors from the bridge deſcend
> With bold fanatick ſpectres to rejoice;
> About the fire into a dance they bend,
> And ſing their ſabbath notes with feeble voice.

His prediction of the improvements which ſhall be made in the new city is elegant and poetical, and with an event which Poets cannot always boaſt has been happily verified. The poem concludes with a ſimile that might have better been omitted.

Dryden, when he wrote this poem, ſeems not yet fully to have formed his verſification, or ſettled his ſyſtem of propriety.

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From this time he addicted himself almost wholly to the stage, "to which," says he, "my genius "never much inclined me," merely as the most profitable market for poetry. By writing tragedies in rhyme, he continued to improve his diction and his numbers. According to the opinion of *Harte*, who had studied his works with great attention, he settled his principles of versification in 1676, when he produced the play of *Aureng Zebe*; and according to his own account of the short time in which he wrote *Tyrannick Love*, and the *State of Innocence*, he soon obtained the full effect of diligence, and added facility to exactness.

Rhyme has been so long banished from the theatre, that we know not its effects upon the passions of an audience; but it has this convenience, that sentences stand more independent on each other, and striking passages are therefore easily selected and retained. Thus the description of Night in the *Indian Emperor*, and the rise and fall of empire in the *Conquest of Granada*, are more frequently repeated than any lines in *All for Love*, or *Don Sebastian*.

To search his plays for vigorous sallies and sententious elegances, or to fix the dates of any little pieces which he wrote by chance, or by solicitation, were labour too tedious and minute.

His dramatick labours did not so wholly absorb his thoughts, but that he promulgated the laws of translation in a preface to the English Epistles of Ovid; one of which he translated himself, and another in conjunction with the Earl of Mulgrave.

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Abſalom and Achitophel is a work ſo well known, that particular criticiſm is ſuperfluous. If it be conſidered as a poem political and controverſial, it will be found to compriſe all the excellences of which the ſubject is ſuſceptible; acrimony of cenſure, elegance of praiſe, artful delineation of characters, variety and vigour of ſentiment, happy turns of language, and pleaſing harmony of numbers; and all theſe raiſed to ſuch a height as can ſcarcely be found in any other Engliſh compoſition.

It is not, however, without faults; ſome lines are inelegant or improper, and too many are irreligiouſly licentious. The original ſtructure of the poem was defective; allegories drawn to great length will always break; Charles could not run continually parallel with David.

The ſubject had likewiſe another inconvenience: it admitted little imagery or deſcription; and a long poem of mere ſentiments eaſily becomes tedious; though all the parts are forcible, and every line kindles new rapture, the reader, if not relieved by the interpoſition of ſomething that ſooths the fancy, grows weary of admiration, and defers the reſt.

As an approach to the hiſtorical truth was neceſſary, the action and cataſtrophe were not in the poet's power; there is therefore an unpleaſing diſproportion between the beginning and the end. We are alarmed by a faction formed of many ſects, various in their principles, but agreeing in their purpoſe of miſchief, formidable for their numbers, and ſtrong by their ſupports; while the King's friends are few and weak. The chiefs on either part

are

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are ſet forth to view: but when expectation is at the height, the King makes a ſpeech, and

Henceforth a ſeries of new times began.

Who can forbear to think of an enchanted caſtle, with a wide moat and lofty battlements, walls of marble and gates of braſs, which vaniſhes at once into air, when the deſtined knight blows his horn before it?

In the ſecond part, written by *Tate*, there is a long inſertion, which, for its poignancy of ſatire, exceeds any part of the former. Perſonal reſentment, though no laudable motive to ſatire, can add great force to general principles. Self-love is a buſy prompter.

The *Medal*, written upon the ſame principles with *Abſalom and Achitophel*, but upon a narrower plan, gives leſs pleaſure, though it diſcovers equal abilities in the writer. The ſuperſtructure cannot extend beyond the foundation; a ſingle character or incident cannot furniſh as many ideas, as a ſeries of events, or multiplicity of agents. This poem therefore, ſince time has left it to itſelf, is not much read, nor perhaps generally underſtood; yet it abounds with touches both of humorous and ſerious ſatire. The picture of a man whoſe propenſions to miſchief are ſuch, that his beſt actions are but inability of wickedneſs, is very ſkilfully delineated and ſtrongly coloured:

Power was his aim; but, thrown from that pretence,
The wretch turn'd loyal in his own defence,
And malice reconcil'd him to his prince.
Him, in the anguiſh of his ſoul, he ſerv'd;
Rewarded faſter ſtill than he deſerv'd:

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Behold him now exalted into truſt;
His counſels oft convenient, ſeldom juſt;
Ev'n in the moſt ſincere advice he gave,
He had a grudging ſtill to be a knave.
The frauds, he learnt in his fanatick years,
Made him uneaſy in his lawful gears,
At leaſt as little honeſt as he cou'd,
And, like white witches, miſchievouſly good.
To this firſt bias, longingly, he leans;
And rather would be great by wicked means.

The *Threnodia*, which, by a term I am afraid neither authorized nor analogical, he calls *Auguſtalis*, is not among his happieſt productions. Its firſt and obvious defect is the irregularity of its metre, to which the ears of that age, however, were accuſtomed. What is worſe, it has neither tenderneſs nor dignity; it is neither magnificent nor pathetick. He ſeems to look round him for images which he cannot find, and what he has he diſtorts by endeavouring to enlarge them. "He is," he ſays, "petrified with "grief;" but the marble ſometimes relents, and trickles in a joke.

The ſons of art all med'cines try'd,
And every noble remedy apply'd:
With emulation each eſſay'd
His utmoſt ſkill; *nay, more, they pray'd:*
Was never loſing game with better conduct play'd.

He had been a little inclined to merriment before, upon the prayers of a nation for their dying ſovereign; nor was he ſerious enough to keep Heathen fables out of his religion:

With

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With him the innumerable crowd of armed prayers
Knock'd at the gates of Heaven, and knock'd aloud;
The first well-meaning rude petitioners
All for his life assail'd the throne,
All would have brib'd the skies by offering up their own.

So great a throng not Heaven itself could bar;
'Twas almost borne by force *as in the giants war:*
The pray'rs, at least, for his reprieve, were heard;
His death, like Hezekiah's, was deferr'd.

There is throughout the composition a desire of splendour without wealth. In the conclusion he seems too much pleased with the prospect of the new reign to have lamented his old master with much sincerity.

He did not miscarry in this attempt for want of skill either in lyrick or elegiack poetry. His poem on the death of Mrs. *Killegrew* is undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language ever has produced. The first part flows with a torrent of enthusiasm. "Fervet immensusque ruit." All the stanzas indeed are not equal. An Imperial crown cannot be one continued diamond; the gems must be held together by some less valuable matter.

good

In his first ode for Cecilia's day, which is lost in the splendor of the second, there are passages which would have dignified any other poet. The first stanza is vigorous and elegant, though the word *diapason* is too technical, and the rhymes are too remote from one another.

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began;
When Nature underneath a heap of jarring atoms lay,
And

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And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
Arise, ye more than dead.
Then cold and hot, and moist and dry,
In order to their stations leap,
And musick's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in man.

The conclusion is likewise striking; but it includes an image so awful in itself, that it can owe little to poetry; and I could wish the antithesis of *musick untuning* had found some other place.

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the bless'd above:

So, when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And musick shall untune the sky.

Of his skill in elegy he has given a specimen in his *Eleonora*, of which the following lines discover their author:

Though all these rare endowments of the mind
Were in a narrow space of life confin'd,
The figure was with full perfection crown'd,
Though not so large an orb, as truly round:

As when in glory, through the publick place,
The ſpoils of conquer'd nations were to paſs,
And but one day for triumph was allow'd,
The conſul was conſtrain'd his pomp to crowd;
And ſo the ſwift proceſſion hurry'd on,
That all, tho' not diſtinctly, might be ſhown;
So, in the ſtraiten'd bounds of life confin'd,
She gave but glimpſes of her glorious mind:
And multitudes of virtues paſs'd along;
Each preſſing foremoſt in the mighty throng,
Ambitious to be ſeen, and then make room
For greater multitudes that were to come.
Yet unemploy'd no minute ſlipp'd away;
Moments were precious in ſo ſhort a ſtay.
The haſte of Heaven to have her was ſo great,
That ſome were ſingle acts, though each complete;
And every act ſtood ready to repeat.

This piece, however, is not without its faults; there is ſo much likeneſs in the initial compariſon, that there is no illuſtration. As a king would be lamented, Eleonora was lamented:

As, when ſome great and gracious monarch dies,
Soft whiſpers, firſt, and mournful murmurs, riſe
Among the ſad attendants; then the ſound
Soon gathers voice, and ſpreads the news around,
Through town and country, till the dreadful blaſt
Is blown to diſtant colonies at laſt,
Who then, perhaps, were offering vows in vain,
For his long life, and for his happy reign;
So ſlowly, by degrees, unwilling Fame
Did matchleſs Eleonora's fate proclaim,
Till publick as the loſs the news became.

This

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This is little better than to ſay in praiſe of a ſhrub, that it is as green as a tree; or of a brook, that it waters a garden, as a river waters a country.

Dryden confeſſes that he did not know the lady, whom he celebrates: the praiſe being therefore inevitably general fixes no impreſſion upon the reader, nor excites any tendency to love, nor much deſire of imitation. Knowledge of the ſubject is to the poet what durable materials are to the architect.

The *Religio Laici*, which borrows its title from the *Religio Medici* of Browne, is almoſt the only work of Dryden which can be conſidered as a voluntary effuſion; in this, therefore, it might be hoped, that the full effulgence of his genius would be found. But unhappily the ſubject is rather argumentative than poetical; he intended only a ſpecimen of metrical diſputation:

> And this unpoliſh'd rugged verſe I choſe,
> As fitteſt for diſcourſe, and neareſt proſe.

This, however, is a compoſition of great excellence in its kind, in which the familiar is very properly diverſified with the ſolemn, and the grave with the humorous; in which metre has neither weakened the force, nor clouded the perſpicuity of argument; nor will it be eaſy to find another example equally happy of this middle kind of writing, which, though proſaick in ſome parts, riſes to high poetry in others, and neither towers to the ſkies, nor creeps along the ground.

Of the ſame kind, or not far diſtant from it, is the *Hind and Panther*, the longeſt of all Dryden's original

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poems; an allegory intended to comprize and to decide the controverſy between the Romaniſts and Proteſtants. The ſcheme of the work is injudicious and incommodious; for what can be more abſurd than that one beaſt ſhould counſel another to reſt her faith upon a pope and council? He ſeems well enough ſkilled in the uſual topicks of argument, endeavours to ſhew the neceſſity of an infallible judge, and reproaches the Reformers with want of unity; but is weak enough to aſk, why, ſince we ſee without knowing how, we may not have an infallible judge without knowing where?

The *Hind* at one time is afraid to drink at the common brook, becauſe ſhe may be worried; but, walking home with the *Panther*, talks by the way of the *Nicene Fathers*, and at laſt declares herſelf to be the Catholick Church.

This abſurdity was very properly ridiculed in the *City Mouſe* and *Country Mouſe* of *Montague* and *Prior*; and in the detection and cenſure of the incongruity of the fiction chiefly conſiſts the value of their performance, which, whatever reputation it might obtain by the help of temporary paſſions, ſeems, to readers almoſt a century diſtant, not very forcible or animated.

Pope, whoſe judgement was perhaps a little bribed by the ſubject, uſed to mention this poem as the moſt correct ſpecimen of Dryden's verſification. It was indeed written when he had completely formed his manner, and may be ſuppoſed to exhibit, negligence excepted, his deliberate and ultimate ſcheme of metre.

We

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We may therefore reasonably infer, that he did not approve the perpetual uniformity which confines the sense to couplets, since he has broken his lines in the initial paragraph.

A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchang'd,
Fed on the lawns, and in the Forest rang'd:
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She fear'd no danger, for she knew no sin.
Yet had she oft been chac'd with horns and hounds,
And Scythian shafts, and many winged wounds
Aim'd at her heart; was often forc'd to fly,
And doom'd to death, though fated not to die.

These lines are lofty, elegant, and musical, notwithstanding the interruption of the pause, of which the effect is rather increase of pleasure by variety, than offence by ruggedness.

To the first part it was his intention, he says, "to "give the majestick turn of heroick poesy;" and perhaps he might have executed his design not unsuccessfully, had not an opportunity of satire, which he cannot forbear, fallen sometimes in his way. The character of a Presbyterian, whose emblem is the *Wolf*, is not very heroically majestick:

More haughty than the rest, the wolfish race
Appear with belly gaunt and famish'd face;
Never was so deform'd a beast of grace.
His ragged tail betwixt his legs he wears,
Close clapp'd for shame; but his rough crest he rears,
And pricks up his predestinating ears.

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His general character of the other ſorts of beaſts that never go to church, though ſprightly and keen, has, however, not much of heroick poeſy:

Theſe are the chief; to number o'er the reſt,
And ſtand like Adam naming every beaſt,
Were weary work; nor will the Muſe deſcribe
A ſlimy-born, and ſun-begotten tribe,
Who, far from ſteeples and their ſacred ſound,
In fields their ſullen conventicles found.
Theſe groſs, half-animated, lumps I leave;
Nor can I think what thoughts they can conceive;
But, if they think at all, 'tis ſure no higher
Than matter, put in motion, may aſpire;
Souls that can ſcarce ferment their maſs of clay,
So droſſy, ſo diviſible are they,
As would but ſerve pure bodies for allay;
Such ſouls as ſhards produce, ſuch beetle things
As only buz to Heaven with evening wings;
Strike in the dark, offending but by chance;
Such are the blindfold blows of ignorance.
They know no being, and but hate a name;
To them the Hind and Panther are the ſame.

One more inſtance, and that taken from the narrative part, where ſtyle was more in his choice, will ſhew how ſteadily he kept his reſolution of heroick dignity.

For when the herd, ſuffic'd, did late repair
To ferney heaths and to their foreſt laire,
She made a mannerly excuſe to ſtay,
Proffering the Hind to wait her half the way;
That, ſince the ſky was clear, an hour of talk
Might help her to beguile the tedious walk.
With much good-will the motion was embrac'd,
To chat awhile on their adventures paſt:

Nor

Nor had the grateful Hind ſo ſoon forgot
Her friend and fellow-ſufferer in the plot.
Yet, wondering how of late ſhe grew eſtrang'd,
Her forehead cloudy and her count'nance chang'd,
She thought this hour th' occaſion would preſent
To learn her ſecret cauſe of diſcontent,
Which well ſhe hop'd might be with eaſe redreſs'd,
Conſidering her a well-bred civil beaſt,
And more a gentlewoman than the reſt.
After ſome common talk what rumours ran,
The lady of the ſpotted muff began.

The ſecond and third parts he profeſſes to have reduced to diction more familiar and more ſuitable to diſpute and converſation; the difference is not, however, very eaſily perceived; the firſt has familiar, and the two others have ſonorous, lines. The original incongruity runs through the whole; the king is now *Cæſar*, and now the *Lyon*; and the name *Pan* is given to the Supreme Being.

But when this conſtitutional abſurdity is forgiven, the poem muſt be confeſſed to be written with great ſmoothneſs of metre, a wide extent of knowledge, and an abundant multiplicity of images; the controverſy is embelliſhed with pointed ſentences, diverſified by illuſtrations, and enlivened by ſallies of invective. Some of the facts to which alluſions are made are now become obſcure, and perhaps there may be many ſatirical paſſages little underſtood.

As it was by its nature a work of defiance, a compoſition which would naturally be examined with the utmoſt acrimony of criticiſm, it was probably laboured with uncommon attention, and there are, indeed,

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deed, few negligences in the ſubordinate parts. The original impropriety, and the ſubſequent unpopularity of the ſubject, added to the ridiculouſneſs of its firſt elements, has ſunk it into neglect; but it may be uſefully ſtudied, as an example of poetical ratiocination, in which the argument ſuffers little from the metre.

In the poem on *the Birth of the Prince of Wales*, nothing is very remarkable but the exorbitant adulation, and that inſenſibility of the precipice on which the king was then ſtanding, which the laureat apparently ſhared with the reſt of the courtiers. A few months cured him of controverſy, diſmiſſed him from court, and made him again a play-wright and tranſlator.

Of Juvenal there had been a tranſlation by Stapylton, and another by Holiday; neither of them is very poetical. Stapylton is more ſmooth; and Holiday's is more eſteemed for the learning of his notes. A new verſion was propoſed to the poets of that time, and undertaken by them in conjunction. The main deſign was conducted by Dryden, whoſe reputation was ſuch that no man was unwilling to ſerve the Muſes under him.

The general character of this tranſlation will be given, when it is ſaid to preſerve the wit, but to want the dignity, of the original. The peculiarity of Juvenal is a mixture of gaiety and ſtatelineſs, of pointed ſentences, and declamatory grandeur. His points have not been neglected; but his grandeur none of the band ſeemed to conſider as neceſſary to be imitated, except *Creech*, who undertook the thirteenth ſatire. It is therefore perhaps poſſible to give a bet-

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a better representation of that great satyrist, even in those parts which Dryden himself has translated, some passages excepted, which will never be excelled.

With Juvenal was published Persius, translated wholly by Dryden. This work, though like all other productions of Dryden it may have shining parts, seems to have been written merely for wages, in an uniform mediocrity, without any eager endeavour after excellence, or laborious effort of the mind.

There wanders an opinion among the readers of poetry, that one of these satires is an exercise of the school. Dryden says, that he once translated it at school; but not that he preserved or published the juvenile performance.

Not long afterwards he undertook perhaps the most arduous work of its kind, a translation of Virgil, for which he had shewn how well he was qualified by his version of the Pollio, and two episodes, one of Nisus and Euryalus, the other of Mezentius and Lausus.

In the comparison of Homer and Virgil, the discriminative excellence of Homer is elevation and comprehension of thought, and that of Virgil is grace and splendour of diction. The beauties of Homer are therefore difficult to be lost, and those of Virgil difficult to be retained. The massy trunk of sentiment is safe by its solidity, but the blossoms of elocution easily drop away. The author, having the choice of his own images, selects those which he can best adorn; the translator must, at all hazards, follow his original, and express thoughts which per-

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haps he would not have chosen. When to this primary difficulty is added the inconvenience of a language so much inferior in harmony to the Latin, it cannot be expected that they who read the Georgicks and the Æneid should be much delighted with any version.

All these obstacles Dryden saw, and all these he determined to encounter. The expectation of his work was undoubtedly great; the nation considered its honour as interested in the event. One gave him the different editions of his author, another helped him in the subordinate parts. The arguments of the several books were given him by Addison.

The hopes of the publick were not disappointed. He produced, says Pope, "the most noble and "spirited translation that I know in any language." It certainly excelled whatever had appeared in English, and appears to have satisfied his friends, and, for the most part, to have silenced his enemies. Milbourne, indeed, a clergyman, attacked it; but his outrages seem to be the ebullitions of a mind agitated by stronger resentment than bad poetry can excite, and previously resolved not to be pleased.

His criticism extends only to the Preface, Pastorals, and Georgicks; and, as he professes to give his antagonist an opportunity of reprisal, he has added his own version of the first and fourth Pastorals, and the first Georgick. The world has forgotten his book; but, since his attempt has given him a place in literary history, I will preserve a specimen of his criticism, by inserting his remarks on the invocation before

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before the first Georgick, and of his poetry, by annexing his own version.

Ver. 1.

" What makes a plenteous harvest, when to turn
" The fruitful soil, and when to sow the corn.

" It 's *unlucky*, they say, *to stumble at the threshold:* " but what has a *plenteous harvest* to do here? *Virgil* would not pretend to prescribe *rules* for *that* " which depends not on the *husbandman's* care, but the " *disposition of Heaven* altogether. Indeed, the *plenteous crop* depends somewhat on the *good method of* " *tillage*; and where the *land*'s ill-manur'd, the *corn*, " without a miracle, can be but *indifferent*; but the " *harvest* may be *good*, which is its *propereſt* epithet, " tho' the *husbandman's skill* were never so *indifferent*. " The next *sentence* is *too literal*, and *when to plough* " had been *Virgil's* meaning, and intelligible to every " body; and *when to sow the corn*, is a needless *addition*."

Ver. 3.

" The care of sheep, of oxen, and of kine,
" And when to geld the lambs, and sheer the swine,

" would as well have fallen under the *cura boum*, " *qui cultus habendo sit pecori*, as Mr. *D's deduction* of " particulars."

Ver. 5.

" The birth and genius of the frugal bee
" I sing, Mæcenas, and I sing to thee.

" But where did *experientia* ever signify *birth and* " *genius?* or what ground was there for such a " *figure*

"*figure* in this place? How much more manly is "Mr. *Ogylby's* version!"

"What makes rich grounds, in what celestial signs
"'Tis good to plough, and marry elms with vines;
"What best fits cattle, what with sheep agrees,
"And several arts improving frugal bees;
"I sing, Mæcenas.

"Which four lines, tho' faulty enough, are yet much "more to the purpose than Mr. *D's* six."

Ver. 22.

"From fields and mountains to my song repair.

"For *patrium linquens nemus, saltusque Lycæi*——
"Very well explained!"

Ver. 23, 24.

"Inventor Pallas, of the fattening oil,
"Thou founder of the plough, and ploughman's toil!

"Written as if *these* had been *Pallas's invention.*"
"*The ploughman's toil*'s impertinent.

Ver. 25.

"—— The shroud-like cypress——

"Why *shroud-like?* Is a *cypress*, pulled up by the "*roots*, which the *sculpture* in the *last Eclogue* fills "*Silvanus's* hand with, so very like a *shroud?* Or "did not Mr. *D.* think of that kind of *cypress* us'd "often for *scarves and hatbands* at funerals formerly, "or for *widows' vails*, &c.? if so, 'twas a *deep*, *good* "*thought.*"

Ver. 26.

"————————That wear
"The royal honours, and increase the year.

"What's

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"What's meant by *increasing the year?* Did the *gods* "or *goddesses* add more *months*, or *days*, or *hours*, "to it? Or how can *arva tueri* signify to *wear rural* "*honours?* Is this to *translate*, or *abuse* an *author?* "The next *couplet* is borrowed from *Ogylby*, I suppose, because *less to the purpose* than ordinary."

Ver. 33.

"The patron of the world, and Rome's peculiar guard.

"*Idle*, and none of *Virgil's*; no more than the sense "of the *precedent couplet*; so again, he *interpolates* "*Virgil* with that and *the round circle of the year to* "*guide powerful of blessings, which thou strew'st around*; "a ridiculous *Latinism*, and an *impertinent addition*; "indeed the whole *period* is but one piece of *absurdity* and *nonsense*, as those who lay it with the "*original* must find."

Ver. 42, 43.

"And Neptune shall resign the fasces of the sea.

"Was he *consul* or *dictator* there?

"And watry virgins for thy bed shall strive.

"Both absurd *interpolations*."

Ver. 47, 48.

"Where in the void of Heaven a place is free.
"*Ah happy*, D——n, *were* that place *for thee!*

"But where is *that void?* Or, what does our *translator* mean by it? He knows what *Ovid* says *God* "did

" did to prevent ſuch a *void* in Heaven; perhaps " this was then forgotten: but *Virgil* talks more " ſenſibly."

Ver. 49.

" The ſcorpion ready to receive thy laws.

" No, he would not then have *gotten out of his way* " ſo faſt.

Ver. 56.

" Though Proſerpine affects her ſilent ſeat.

" What made *her* then ſo *angry* with *Aſcalaphus*, for " preventing her return? She was now mus'd to *Pa-* " *tience* under the *determinations of Fate*, rather than " *fond* of her *reſidence*."

Ver. 61, 62, 63.

" Pity the poet's and the ploughman's cares,
" Intereſt thy greatneſs in our mean affairs,
" And uſe thyſelf betimes to hear our prayers.

" Which is ſuch a wretched *perverſion* of *Virgil's* " *noble thought* as *Vicars* would have bluſh'd at; but " Mr. *Ogylby* makes us ſome amends, by his better " lines:

" O wherefoe'er thou art, from thence incline,
" And grant aſſiſtance to my bold deſign!
" Pity, with me, poor huſbandmen's affairs,
" And now, as if tranſlated, hear our prayers.

" This is *ſenſe*, and *to the purpoſe*: the other, poor " *miſtaken ſtuff*."

Such were the ſtrictures of Milbourne, who found few abettors, and of whom it may be reaſonably imagined,

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imagined, that many who favoured his design were ashamed of his insolence.

When admiration had subsided, the translation was more coolly examined, and found, like all others, to be sometimes erroneous, and sometimes licentious. Those who could find faults, thought they could avoid them; and Dr. Brady attempted in blank verse a translation of the Æneid, which, when dragged into the world, did not live long enough to cry. I have never seen it; but that such a version there is, or has been, perhaps some old catalogue informed me.

With not much better success, Trapp, when his Tragedy and his Prelections had given him reputation, attempted another blank version of the Æneid; to which, notwithstanding the slight regard with which it was treated, he had afterwards perseverance enough to add the Eclogues aud Georgicks. His book may continue in existence as long as it is the clandestine refuge of school-boys.

Since the English ear has been accustomed to the mellifluence of Pope's numbers, and the diction of poetry has become more splendid, new attempts have been made to translate Virgil; and all his works have been attempted by men better qualified to contend with Dryden. I will not engage myself in an invidious comparison, by opposing one passage to another; a work of which there would be no end, and which might be often offensive without use.

It is not by comparing line with line that the merit of great works is to be estimated, but by their general effects and ultimate result. It is easy to note a weak

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line, and write one more vigorous in its place; to find a happineſs of expreſſion in the original, and tranſplant it by force into the verſion: but what is given to the parts may be ſubducted from the whole, and the reader may be weary, though the critick may commend. Works of imagination excel by their allurement and delight; by their power of attracting and detaining the attention. That book is good in vain, which the reader throws away. He only is the maſter, who keeps the mind in pleaſing captivity; whoſe pages are peruſed with eagerneſs, and in hope of new pleaſure are peruſed again; and whoſe concluſion is perceived with an eye of ſorrow, ſuch as the traveller caſts upon departing day.

By his proportion of this predomination I will conſent that Dryden ſhould be tried; of this, which, in oppoſition to reaſon, makes Arioſto the darling and the pride of Italy; of this, which, in defiance of criticiſm, continues Shakſpeare the ſovereign of the drama.

His laſt work was his *Fables*, in which he gave us the firſt example of a mode of writing which the Italians call *refaccimento*, a renovation of ancient writers, by modernizing their language. Thus the old poem of *Boiardo* has been new-dreſſed by *Domenichi* and *Berni*. The works of Chaucer, which upon this kind of rejuveneſcence has been beſtowed by Dryden, require little criticiſm. The tale of the Cock ſeems hardly worth revival; and the ſtory of *Palamon* and *Arcite*, containing an action unſuitable to the times in which it is placed, can hardly be ſuffered to paſs without cenſure of the hyperbolical commendation which Dryden has given it in the general

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neral Preface, and in a poetical Dedication, a piece where his original fondness of remote conceits seems to have revived.

Of the three pieces borrowed from Boccace, *Sigismunda* my be defended by the celebrity of the story. *Theodore* and *Honoria*, though it contains not much moral, yet afforded opportunities of striking description. And *Cymon* was formerly a tale of such reputation, that at the revival of letters it was translated into Latin by one of the *Beroalds*.

Whatever subjects employed his pen he was still improving our measures, and embellishing our language.

In this volume are interspersed some short original poems, which, with his prologues, epilogues, and songs, may be comprised in Congreve's remark, that even those, if he had written nothing else, would have entitled him to the praise of excellence in his kind.

One composition must however be distinguished. The ode for *St. Cecilia's* Day, perhaps the last effort of his poetry, has been always considered as exhibiting the highest flight of fancy, and the exactest nicety of art. This is allowed to stand without a rival. If indeed there is any excellence beyond it, in some other of Dryden's works that excellence must be found. Compared with the ode on *Killigrew*, it may be pronounced perhaps superior in the whole, but without any single part equal to the first stanza of the other.

It is said to have cost Dryden a fortnight's labour; but it does not want its negligences; some of the lines are without correspondent rhymes; a defect,

 which

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which I never detected but after an acquaintance of many years, and which the enthusiasm of the writer might hinder him from perceiving.

His last stanza has less emotion than the former; but it is not less elegant in the diction. The conclusion is vicious; the musick of *Timotheus*, which *raised a mortal to the skies*, had only a metaphorical power; that of *Cecilia*, which *drew an angel down*, had a real effect: the crown therefore could not reasonably be divided.

In a general survey of Dryden's labours, he appears to have a mind very comprehensive by nature, and much enriched with acquired knowledge. His compositions are the effects of a vigorous genius operating upon large materials.

The power that predominated in his intellectual operations was rather strong reason than quick sensibility. Upon all occasions that were presented, he studied rather than felt, and produced sentiments not such as nature enforces, but meditation supplies. With the simple and elemental passions, as they spring separate in the mind, he seems not much acquainted; and seldom describes them but as they are complicated by the various relations of society, and confused in the tumults and agitations of life.

What he says of Love may contribute to the explanation of his character:

> Love various minds does variously inspire:
> It stirs in gentle bosoms gentle fire,
> Like that of incense on the altar laid;
> But raging flames tempestuous souls invade:
> A fire which every windy passion blows,
> With pride it mounts, or with revenge it glows.

Dryden's

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Dryden's was not one of the *gentle bosoms*: Love, as it subsists in itself, with no tendency but to the person loved, and wishing only for correspondent kindness; such Love as shuts out all other interest, the Love of the Golden Age, was too soft and subtle to put his faculties in motion. He hardly conceived it but in its turbulent effervescence with some other desires; when it was enflamed by rivalry, or obstructed by difficulties; when it invigorated ambition, or exasperated revenge.

He is therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetick; and had so little sensibility of the power of effusions purely natural, that he did not esteem them in others. Simplicity gave him no pleasure; and for the first part of his life he looked on *Otway* with contempt, though at last, indeed very late, he confessed that in his play *there* was *Nature, which is the chief beauty.*

We do not always know our own motives. I am not certain whether it was not rather the difficulty which he found in exhibiting the genuine operations of the heart, than a servile submission to an injudicious audience, that filled his plays with false magnificence. It was necessary to fix attention; and the mind can be captivated only by recollection, or by curiosity; by reviving natural sentiments, or impressing new appearances of things: sentences were readier at his call than images; he could more easily fill the ear with splendid novelty, than awaken those ideas that slumber in the heart.

The favourite exercise of his mind was ratiocination; and, that argument might not be too soon at an end, he delighted to talk of liberty and necessity,

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destiny and contingence; these he discusses in the language of the school with so much profundity, that the terms which he uses are not always understood. It is indeed learning, but learning out of place.

When once he had engaged himself in disputation, thoughts flowed in on either side: he was now no longer at a loss; he had always objections and solutions at command; "verbaque provisam rem"—give him matter for his verse, and he finds without difficulty verse for his matter.

In Comedy, for which he professes himself not naturally qualified, the mirth which he excites will perhaps not be found so much to arise from any original humour, or peculiarity of character nicely distinguished and diligently pursued, as from incidents and circumstances, artifices and surprizes; from jests of action rather than of sentiment. What he had of humorous or passionate, he seems to have had not from nature, but from other poets; if not always as a plagiary, at least as an imitator.

Next to argument, his delight was in wild and daring sallies of sentiment, in the irregular and eccentrick violence of wit. He delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning, where light and darkness begin to mingle; to approach the precipice of absurdity, and hover over the abyss of unideal vacancy. This inclination sometimes produced nonsense, which he knew; as,

> Move swiftly, Sun, and fly a lover's pace,
> Leave weeks and months behind thee in thy race,
> Amaniel flies
> To guard thee from the demons of the air;

My

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My flaming ſword above them to diſplay,
All keen, and ground upon the edge of day.

And ſometimes it iſſued in abſurdities, of which perhaps he was not conſcious:

Then we upon our orb's laſt verge ſhall go,
And ſee the ocean leaning on the ſky;
From thence our rolling neighbours we ſhall know,
And on the lunar world ſecurely pry.

Theſe lines have no meaning; but may we not ſay, in imitation of Cowley on another book,

'Tis ſo like *ſenſe* 'twill ſerve the turn as well?

This endeavour after the grand and the new produced many ſentiments either great or bulky, and many images either juſt or ſplendid:

I am as free as Nature firſt made man,
Ere the baſe laws of ſervitude began,
When wild in woods the noble ſavage ran.

—'Tis but becauſe the Living death ne'er knew,
They fear to prove it as a thing that's new:
Let me th' experiment before you try,
I'll ſhew you firſt how eaſy 'tis to die.

—There with a foreſt of their darts he ſtrove,
And ſtood like *Capaneus* defying Jove,
With his broad ſword the boldeſt beating down,
While Fate grew pale leſt he ſhould win the town,
And turn'd the iron leaves of his dark book
To make new dooms, or mend what it miſtook.

—I beg no pity for this mouldering clay;
For if you give it burial, there it takes
Poſſeſſion of your earth:

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If burnt, and ſcatter'd in the air, the winds
That ſtrew my duſt diffuſe my royalty,
And ſpread me o'er your clime; for where one atom
Of mine ſhall light, know there Sebaſtian reigns.

Of theſe quotations the two firſt may be allowed to be great, the two latter only tumid.

Of ſuch ſelection there is no end. I will add only a few more paſſages; of which the firſt, though it may perhaps be quite clear in proſe, is not too obſcure for poetry, as the meaning that it has is noble:

No, there is a neceſſity in Fate,
Why ſtill the brave bold man is fortunate;
He keeps his object ever full in ſight;
And that aſſurance holds him firm and right;
True, 'tis a narrow way that leads to bliſs,
But right before there is no precipice;
Fear makes men look aſide, and ſo their footing miſs.

Of the images which the two following citations afford, the firſt is elegant, the ſecond magnificent; whether either be juſt, let the reader judge:

What precious drops are theſe,
Which ſilently each other's track purſue,
Bright as young diamonds in their infant dew?

———Reſign your caſtle——
—Enter, brave Sir; for, when you ſpeak the word,
The gates ſhall open of their own accord,
The genius of the place its Lord ſhall meet,
And bow its towery forehead at your feet.

Theſe burſts of extravagance Dryden calls the "Dalilahs" of the Theatre; and owns that many noiſy lines of Maximin and Almanzor call out for vengeance upon him: "but I knew," ſays he, "that "they

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"they were bad enough to pleaſe, even when I wrote "them." There is ſurely reaſon to ſuſpect that he pleaſed himſelf as well as his audience; and that theſe, like the harlots of other men, had his love, though not his approbation.

He had ſometimes faults of a leſs generous and ſplendid kind. He makes, like almoſt all other poets, very frequent uſe of mythology, and ſometimes connects religion and fable too cloſely without diſtinction.

He deſcends to diſplay his knowledge with pedantick oſtentation; as when, in tranſlating Virgil, he ſays, "tack to the larboard"—and "veer ſtarboard;" and talks in another work, of "virtue ſpooning "before the wind."—His vanity now and then betrays his ignorance:

> They Nature's king through Nature's opticks view'd;
> Revers'd, they view'd him leſſen'd to their eyes.

He had heard of reverſing a teleſcope, and unluckily reverſes the object.

He is ſometimes unexpectedly mean. When he deſcribes the Supreme Being as moved by prayer to ſtop the Fire of London, what is his expreſſion?

> A hollow cryſtal pyramid he takes,
> In firmamental waters dipp'd above,
> Of this a broad *extinguiſher* he makes,
> And *hoods* the flames that to their quarry ſtrove.

When he deſcribes the Laſt Day, and the deciſive tribunal, he intermingles this image:

> When rattling bones together fly,
> From the four quarters of the ſky,

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It was indeed never in his power to resist the temptation of a jest. In his Elegy on Cromwell:

> No sooner was the Frenchman's cause embrac'd,
> Than the *light Monsieur* the *grave Don* outweigh'd;
> His fortune turn'd the scale ———

He had a vanity, unworthy of his abilities, to shew, as may be suspected, the rank of the company with whom he lived, by the use of French words, which had then crept into conversation; such as *fraicheur* for *coolness*, *fougue* for *turbulence*, and a few more, none of which the language has incorporated or retained. They continue only where they stood first, perpetual warnings to future innovators.

These are his faults of affectation; his faults of negligence are beyond recital. Such is the unevenness of his compositions, that ten lines are seldom found together without something of which the reader is ashamed. Dryden was no rigid judge of his own pages; he seldom struggled after supreme excellence, but snatched in haste what was within his reach; and when he could content others, was himself contented. He did not keep present to his mind an idea of pure perfection; nor compare his works, such as they were, with what they might be made. He knew to whom he should be opposed. He had more musick than Waller, more vigour than Denham, and more nature than Cowley; and from his contemporaries he was in no danger. Standing therefore in the highest place, he had no care to rise by contending with himself; but, while there was no name above his own, was willing to enjoy fame on the easiest terms.

He

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He was no lover of labour. What he thought ſufficient, he did not ſtop to make better; and allowed himſelf to leave many parts unfiniſhed, in confidence that the good lines would overbalance the bad. What he had once written, he diſmiſſed from his thoughts; and I believe there is no example to be found of any correction or improvement made by him after publication. The haſtineſs of his productions might be the effect of neceſſity; but his ſubſequent neglect could hardly have any other cauſe than impatience of ſtudy.

What can be ſaid of his verſification will be little more than a dilatation of the praiſe given it by Pope;

> Waller was ſmooth; but Dryden taught to join
> The varying verſe, the full-reſounding line,
> The long majeſtic march, and energy divine.

Some improvements had been already made in Engliſh numbers; but the full force of our language was not yet felt; the verſe that was ſmooth was commonly feeble. If Cowley had ſometimes a finiſhed line, he had it by chance. Dryden knew how to chuſe the flowing and the ſonorous words; to vary the pauſes, and adjuſt the accents; to diverſify the cadence, and yet preſerve the ſmoothneſs of his metre.

Of Triplets and Alexandrines, though he did not introduce the uſe, he eſtabliſhed it. The Triplet has long ſubſiſted among us. Dryden ſeems not to have traced it higher than to Chapman's Homer; but it is to be found in Phaer's Virgil, written in the reign of Mary; and in Hall's Satires, publiſhed five years before the death of Elizabeth.

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The Alexandrine was, I believe, firſt uſed by Spenſer, for the ſake of cloſing his ſtanza with a fuller ſound. We had a longer meaſure of fourteen ſyllables, into which the Æneid was tranſlated by Phaer, and other works of the ancients by other writers; of which Chapman's Iliad was, I believe, the laſt.

The two firſt lines of *Phaer's* third Æneid will exemplify this meaſure:

When Aſia's ſtate was overthrown, and Priam's kingdom ſtout,
All guiltleſs, by the power of gods above was rooted out.

As theſe lines had their break, or *cæſura*, always at the eighth ſyllable, it was thought, in time, commodious to divide them: and quatrains of lines, alternately, conſiſting of eight and ſix ſyllables, make the moſt ſoft and pleaſing of our lyrick meaſures; as,

Relentleſs Time, deſtroying power,
Which ſtone and braſs obey,
Who giv'ſt to ev'ry flying hour
To work ſome new decay.

In the Alexandrine, when its power was once felt, ſome poems, as *Drayton's Polyolbion*, were wholly written; and ſometimes the meaſures of twelve and fourteen ſyllables were interchanged with one another. Cowley was the firſt that inſerted the Alexandrine at pleaſure among the heroick lines of ten ſyllables, and from him Dryden profeſſes to have adopted it.

The Triplet and Alexandrine are not univerſally approved. *Swift* always cenſured them, and wrote ſome

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ſome lines to ridicule them. In examining their propriety, it is to be conſidered that the eſſence of verſe is regularity, and its ornament is variety. To write verſe, is to diſpoſe ſyllables and ſounds harmonically by ſome known and ſettled rule; a rule however lax enough to ſubſtitute ſimilitude for identity, to admit change without breach of order, and to relieve the ear without diſappointing it. Thus a Latin hexameter is formed from dactyls and ſpondees differently combined; the Engliſh heroick admits of acute or grave ſyllables variouſly diſpoſed. The Latin never deviates into ſeven feet, or exceeds the number of ſeventeen ſyllables; but the Engliſh Alexandrine breaks the lawful bounds, and ſurpriſes the reader with two ſyllables more than he expected.

The effect of the triplet is the ſame; the ear has been accuſtomed to expect a new rhyme in every couplet; but is on a ſudden ſurprized with three rhymes together, to which the reader could not accommodate his voice, did he not obtain notice of the change from the braces of the margins. Surely there is ſometing unſkilful in the neceſſity of ſuch mechanical direction.

Conſidering the metrical art ſimply as a ſcience, and conſequently excluding all caſualty, we muſt allow that Triplets and Alexandrines, inſerted by caprice, are interruptions of that conſtancy to which ſcience aſpires. And though the variety which they produce may very juſtly be deſired, yet, to make poetry exact, there ought to be ſome ſtated mode of admitting them.

But till ſome ſuch regulation can be formed, I wiſh them ſtill to be retained in their preſent ſtate. They

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They are ſometimes convenient to the poet. *Fenton* was of opinion, that Dryden was too liberal, and Pope too ſparing, in their uſe.

The rhymes of Dryden are commonly juſt, and he valued himſelf for his readineſs in finding them; but he is ſometimes open to objection.

It is the common practice of our poets to end the ſecond line with a weak or grave ſyllable:

> Together o'er the Alps methinks we fly,
> Fill'd with ideas of fair *Italy*.

Dryden ſometimes puts the weak rhyme in the firſt:

> Laugh, all the powers that favour *tyranny*,
> And all the ſtanding army of the ſky.

Sometimes he concludes a period or paragraph with the firſt line of a couplet, which, though the French ſeem to do it without irregularity, always diſpleaſes in Engliſh poetry.

The Alexandrine, though much his favourite, is not always very diligently fabricated by him. It invariably requires a break at the ſixth ſyllable; a rule which the modern French poets never violate, but which Dryden ſometimes neglected:

> And with paternal thunder vindicates his throne.

Of Dryden's works it was ſaid by Pope, that "he could ſelect from them better ſpecimens of every "mode of poetry than any other Engliſh writer could "ſupply." Perhaps no nation ever produced a writer that enriched his language with ſuch variety of models. To him we owe the improvement, perhaps the

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the completion of our metre, the refinement of our language, and much of the correctness of our sentiments. By him we were taught "sapere & sari," to think naturally and express forcibly. Though Davies has reasoned in rhyme before him, it may be perhaps maintained that he was the first who joined argument with poetry. He shewed us the true bounds of a translator's liberty. What was said of Rome, adorned by Augustus, may be applied by an easy metaphor to English poetry embellished by Dryden, "lateritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit." He found it brick, and he left it marble.

The invocation before the Georgicks is here inserted from Mr. Milbourne's version, that, according to his own proposal, his verses may be compared with those which he censures.

What makes the richest *tilth*, beneath what signs
To *plough*, and when to match your *elms* and *vines*;
What care with *flocks*, and what with *herds* agrees,
And all the management of frugal *bees*;
I sing, *Mæcenas!* Ye immensely clear,
Vast orbs of light, which guide the rolling year;
Bacchus, and mother *Ceres*, if by you
We fatt'ning *corn* for hungry *mast* pursue,
If, taught by you, we first the *cluster* prest,
And *thin cold streams* with *sprightly juice* refresht;
Ye *fawns*, the present *numens* of the field,
Wood nymphs and *fawns*, your kind assistance yield;
Your gifts I sing: and thou, at whose fear'd stroke
From rending earth the fiery *courser* broke,
Great *Neptune*, O assist my artful song!
And thou to whom the woods and groves belong,
Whose snowy heifers on her flow'ry plains
In mighty herds the *Cæan Isle* maintains!

Pan,

Pan, happy ſhepherd, if thy cares divine,
E'er to improve thy *Mænalus* incline,
Leave thy *Lycæan wood* and *native grove*,
And with thy lucky ſmiles our work approve;
Be *Palias* too, ſweet oil's inventor, kind;
And he who firſt the crooked *plough* deſign'd,
Sylvanus, god of all the woods, appear,
Whoſe hands a new-drawn tender *cypreſs* bear!
Ye *gods* and *goddeſſes*, who e'er with love
Would guard our paſtures and our fields improve;
You, who new plants from unknown lands ſupply,
And with condenſing clouds obſcure the ſky,
And drop them ſoftly thence in fruitful ſhowers;
Aſſiſt my enterprize ye gentle powers!
And thou, great *Cæſar!* though we know not yet
Among what gods thou 'lt fix thy lofty ſeat;
Whether thou 'lt be the kind *tutelar god*
Of thy own *Rome*, or with thy awful nod
Guide the vaſt world, while thy great hand ſhall bear
The fruits and ſeaſons of the turning year,
And thy bright brows thy mother's myrtles wear;
Whether thou 'lt all the boundleſs ocean ſway,
And ſea-men only to thyſelf ſhall pray;
Thule, the faireſt iſland, kneel to thee,
And, that thou may'ſt her ſon by marriage be,
Tethys will for the happy purchaſe yield
To make a *dowry* of her wat'ry field:
Whether thou 'lt add to Heaven a *brighter ſign*,
And o'er the *ſummer months* ſerenely ſhine;
Where between *Cancer* and *Erigone*,
There yet remains a ſpacious *room* for thee;
Where the hot *Scorpion* too his arm declines,
And more to thee than half his *arch* reſigns;
Whate'er thou 'lt be; for ſure the realms below
No juſt pretence to thy command can ſhow:
No ſuch ambition ſways thy vaſt deſires,
Though *Greece* her own *Elyſian Fields* admires.

And

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And now, at laſt, contented *Proſerpine*
Can all her mother's earneſt prayers decline.
Whate'er thou 'lt be, O guide our gentle courſe;
And with thy ſmiles our bold attempts enforce;
With me th' unknowing *ruſticks'* wants relieve,
And, though on earth, our ſacred vows receive!

Mr. DRYDEN, having received from Rymer his *Remarks on the Tragedies of the laſt Age*, wrote obſervations on the blank leaves; which, having been in the poſſeſſion of Mr. Garrick, are by his favour communicated to the publick, that no particle of Dryden may be loſt.

"That we may leſs wonder why pity and ter-
"ror are not now the only ſprings on which our tra-
"gedies move, and that Shakſpeare may be more
"excuſed, Rapin confeſſes that the French tragedies
"now all run on the *tendre*; and gives the reaſon,
"becauſe love is the paſſion which moſt predomi-
"nates in our ſouls, and that therefore the paſſions
"repreſented become inſipid, unleſs they are con-
"formable to the thoughts of the audience. But it
"is to be concluded, that this paſſion works not now
"amongſt the French ſo ſtrongly as the other two
"did amongſt the ancients. Amongſt us, who have
"a ſtronger genius for writing, the operations from
"the writing are much ſtronger; for the raiſing of
"Shakſpeare's paſſions is more from the excellency
"of the words and thoughts, than the juſtneſs of
"the occaſion; and, if he has been able to pick
"ſingle occaſions, he has never founded the whole
"reaſonably: yet, by the genius of poetry in writing,
"he has ſucceeded.

"Rapin

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"Rapin attributes more to the *dictio*, that is, to "the words and discourse of a tragedy, than Ari- "stotle has done, who places them in the last rank of "beauties; perhaps, only last in order, because they "are the last product of the design, of the disposi- "tion or connection of its parts; of the characters, "of the manners of those characters, and of the "thoughts proceeding from those manners. Rapin's "words are remarkable: 'Tis not the admirable in- "trigue, the surprising events, and extraordinary "incidents, that make the beauty of a tragedy: 'tis "the discourses, when they are natural and passion- "ate: so are Shakspeare's.

"The parts of a poem, tragick or heroick, are,

"1. The fable itself.

"2. The order or manner of its contrivance, in "relation of the parts to the whole.

"3. The manners, or decency, of the characters, "in speaking or acting what is proper for them, "and proper to be shewn by the poet.

"4. The thoughts which expess the manners.

"5. The words which express those thoughts.

"In the last of these Homer excels Virgil; Vir- "gil all the other ancient poets; and Shakspeare all "modern poets.

"For the second of these, the order: the mean- "ing is, that a fable ought to have a beginning, "middle, and an end, all just and natural; so that "that part, *e. g.* which is the middle, could not na- "turally be the beginning or end, and so of the rest: "all depend on one another, like the links of a "curious chain. If terror and pity are only to be "raised, certainly this author follows Aristotle's

"rules,

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"rules, and Sophocles' and Euripides' example; "but joy may be raised too, and that doubly, either by seeing a wicked man punished, or a good "man at last fortunate; or perhaps indignation, to "see wickedness prosperous, and goodness depressed: both these may be profitable to the end "of a tragedy, reformation of manners; but the "last improperly, only as it begets pity in the audience; though Aristotle, I confess, places tragedies of this kind in the second form.

"He who undertakes to answer this excellent critique of Mr. Rymer, in behalf of our English "poets against the Greek, ought to do it in this "manner: either by yielding to him the greatest "part of what he contends for, which consists in "this, that the μύθος, *i. e.* the design and conduct "of it, is more conducing in the Greeks to those "ends of tragedy, which Aristotle and he propose, "namely, to cause terrour and pity; yet the granting this does not set the Greeks above the English "poets.

"But the answerer ought to prove two things: first, "that the fable is not the greatest master-piece of a "tragedy, though it be the foundation of it.

"Secondly, that other ends as suitable to the nature of tragedy may be found in the English, "which were not in the Greek.

"Aristotle places the fable first; not *quoad dignitatem, sed quoad fundamentum:* for a fable, never so movingly contrived to those ends of his, "pity and terrour, will operate nothing on our affections, except the characters, manners, thoughts, "and words, are suitable.

"So that it remains for Mr. Rymer to prove, "that in all those, or the greatest part of them, we "are inferior to Sophocles and Euripides; and this "he has offered at, in some measure; but, I think, "a little partially to the ancients.

"For the fable itself, 'tis in the English more "adorned with episodes, and larger than in the "Greek poets; consequently more diverting. For, "if the action be but one, and that plain, without "any counterturn of design or episode, *i. e.* under-"plot, how can it be so pleasing as the English, "which have both underplot and a turned design, "which keeps the audience in expectation of the "catastrophe? whereas in the Greek poets we see "through the whole design at first.

"For the characters, they are neither so many "nor so various in Sophocles and Euripides, as in "Shakspeare and Fletcher; only they are more "adapted to those ends of tragedy which Aristotle "commends to us, pity and terrour.

"The manners flow from the characters, and "consequently must partake of their advantages "and disadvantages.

"The thoughts and words, which are the fourth "and fifth beauties of tragedy, are certainly more "noble and more poetical in the English than in the "Greek, which must be proved by comparing them "somewhat more equitably than Mr. Rymer has "done.

"After all, we need not yield that the English "way is less conducing to move pity and terrour, be-"cause they often shew virtue oppressed and vice "punished; where they do not both, or either, "they are not to be defended.

"And

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"And if we ſhould grant that the Greeks per-
"formed this better, perhaps it may admit of diſ-
"pute, whether pity and terrour are either the prime,
"or at leaſt the only ends of tragedy.

"'Tis not enough that Ariſtotle had ſaid ſo; for,
"Ariſtotle drew his models of tragedy from Sopho-
"cles and Euripides; and if he had ſeen ours, might
"have changed his mind. And chiefly we have
"to ſay (what I hinted on pity and terrour, in the
"laſt paragraph ſave one), that the puniſhment of
"vice and reward of virtue are the moſt adequate
"ends of tragedy, becauſe moſt conducing to good
"example of life. Now, pity is not ſo eaſily
"raiſed for a criminal (and the ancient tragedy al-
"ways repreſents its chief perſon ſuch) as it is for
"an innocent man; and the ſuffering of innocence
"and puniſhment of the offender is of the nature of
"Engliſh tragedy: contrarily, in the Greek, inno-
"cence is unhappy often, and the offender eſcapes.
"Then we are not touched with the ſufferings of
"any ſort of men ſo much as of lovers; and this
"was almoſt unknown to the ancients: ſo that they
"neither adminiſtered poetical juſtice, of which
"Mr. Rymer boaſts, ſo well as we; neither knew
"they the beſt common-place of pity, which is love.

"He therefore unjuſtly blames us for not building
"on what the ancients left us; for it ſeems, upon
"conſideration of the premiſes, that we have wholly
"finiſhed what they began.

"My judgment on this piece is this: that it is
"extremely learned, but that the author of it is
"better read in the Greek than in the Engliſh
"poets; that all writers ought to ſtudy this cri-

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"tique, as the best account I have ever seen of the "ancients; that the model of tragedy, he has here "given, is excellent, and extremely correct; but "that it is not the only model of all tragedy, be-"cause it is too much circumscribed in plot, cha-"racters, &c. and, lastly, that we may be taught "here justly to admire and imitate the ancients, "without giving them the preference with this au-"thor, in prejudice to our own country.

"Want of method in this excellent treatise makes "the thoughts of the author sometimes obscure.

"His meaning, that pity and terrour are to be "moved, is, that they are to be moved as the means "conducing to the ends of tragedy, which are plea-"sure and instruction.

"And these two ends may be thus distinguished. "The chief end of the poet is to please; for his im-"mediate reputation depends on it.

"The great end of the poem is to instruct, which "is performed by making pleasure the vehicle of "that instruction; for, poesy is an art, and all arts "are made to profit. *Rapin.*

"The pity, which the poet is to labour for, is "for the criminal, not for those or him whom he "has murdered, or who have been the occasion of "the tragedy. The terrour is likewise in the punish-"ment of the same criminal; who, if he be repre-"sented too great an offender, will not be pitied; if "altogether innocent, his punishment will be unjust.

"Another obscurity is, where he says, Sophocles "perfected tragedy by introducing the third actor: "that is, he meant three kinds of action; one com-"pany singing, or speaking; another playing on "the musick; a third dancing.

"To

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"To make a true judgment in this competition "betwixt the Greek poets and the English, in tra- "gedy:

"Consider, first, how Aristotle has defined a "tragedy. Secondly, what he assigns the end of it "to be. Thirdly, what he thinks the beauties of "it. Fourthly, the means to attain the end pro- "posed.

"Compare the Greek and English tragick poets "justly, and without partiality, according to those "rules.

"Then, secondly, consider whether Aristotle has "made a just definition of tragedy; of its parts, of "its ends, and of its beauties; and whether he, "having not seen any others but those of Sophocles, "Euripides, &c. had or truly could determine what "all the excellencies of tragedy are, and wherein "they consist.

"Next, shew in what ancient tragedy was defici- "ent: for example, in the narrowness of its plots, "and fewness of persons; and try whether that be "not a fault in the Greek poets; and whether their "excellency was so great, when the variety was vi- "sibly so little; or whether what they did was not "very easy to do.

"Then make a judgment on what the English "have added to their beauties: as, for example, "not only more plot, but also new passions; as, "namely, that of love, scarcely touched on by the "ancients, except in this one example of Phædra, "cited by Mr. Rymer; and in that how short they "were of Fletcher!

"Prove also that love, being an heroick passion,

"is fit for tragedy, which cannot be denied, be-
"cause of the example alleged of Phædra; and how
"far Shakspeare has outdone them in friendship, &c.

"To return to the beginning of this enquiry;
"consider if pity and terrour be enough for tragedy
"to move: and I believe, upon a true definition
"of tragedy, it will be found that its work extends
"farther, and that it is to reform manners, by a
"delightful representation of human life in great
"persons, by way of dialogue. If this be true, then
"not only pity and terrour are to be moved, as the only
"means to bring us to virtue, but generally love to
"virtue, and hatred to vice; by shewing the re-
"wards of one, and punishments of the other; at
"least, by rendering virtue always amiable, though
"it be shewn unfortunate; and vice detestable,
"though it be shewn triumphant.

"If, then, the encouragement of virtue and dis-
"couragement of vice be the proper ends of poetry
"in tragedy, pity and terrour, though good means,
"are not the only. For all the passions, in their
"turns, are to be set in a ferment; as joy, anger,
"love, fear, are to be used as the poet's common-
"places; and a general concernment for the prin-
"cipal actors is to be raised, by making them ap-
"pear such in their characters, their words, and ac-
"tions, as will interest the audience in their fortunes.

"And if, after all, in a larger sense, pity com-
"prehends this concernment for the good, and ter-
"rour includes detestation for the bad, then let us
"consider whether the English have not answered
"this end of tragedy as well as the ancients, or
"perhaps better.

"And

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"And here Mr. Rymer's objections against these "plays are to be impartially weighed, that we may "see whether they are of weight enough to turn the "balance against our countrymen.

"'Tis evident those plays, which he arraigns, "have moved both those passions in a high degree "upon the stage.

"To give the glory of this away from the poet, "and to place it upon the actors, seems unjust.

"One reason is, because whatever actors they "have found, the event has been the same; that is, "the same passions have been always moved; which "shews that there is something of force and merit "in the plays themselves, conducing to the design "of raising these two passions: and suppose them "ever to have been excellently acted, yet action "only adds grace, vigour, and more life, upon "the stage; but cannot give it wholly where it is "not first. But, secondly, I dare appeal to those "who have never seen them acted, if they have "not found these two passions moved within them: "and if the general voice will carry it, Mr. Ry-"mer's prejudice will take off his single testimony.

"This, being matter of fact, is reasonably to be "established by this appeal; as, if one man says "it is night, when the rest of the world conclude it "to be day, there needs no farther argument against "him, that it is so.

"If he urge, that the general taste is depraved, "his arguments to prove this can at best but evince "that our poets took not the best way to raise those "passions; but experience proves against him, that "those

"those means, which they have used, have been "successful, and have produced them.

"And one reason of that success is, in my opi- "nion, this; that Shakspeare and Fletcher have "written to the genius of the age and nation in "which they lived; for though nature, as he ob- "jects, is the same in all places, and reason too the "same; yet the climate, the age, the disposition "of the people, to whom a poet writes, may be so "different, that what pleased the Greeks would not "satisfy an English audience.

"And if they proceed upon a foundation of truer "reason to please the Athenians, than Shakspeare "and Fletcher to please the English, it only shews "that the Athenians were a more judicious people; "but the poet's business is certainly to please the "audience.

"Whether our English audience have been "pleased hitherto with acorns, as he calls it, or "with bread, is the next question; that is, whether "the means which Shakspeare and Fletcher have "used, in their plays, to raise those passions before "named, be better applied to the ends by the "Greek poets than by them. And perhaps we "shall not grant him this wholly: let it be yielded "that a writer is not to run down with the stream; "or to please the people by their usual methods, "but rather to reform their judgments, it still "remains to prove that our theatre needs this total "reformation.

"The faults, which he has found in their design "are rather wittily aggravated in many places than "rea-

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"reasonably urged; and as much may be re-
"turned on the Greeks by one who were as witty
"as himself.

"They destroy not, if they are granted, the
"foundation of the fabrick; only take away from
"the beauty of the symmetry; for example, the
"faults in the character of the King, in King and
"No-king, are not, as he calls them, such as ren-
"der him detestable, but only imperfections which
"accompany human nature, and are for the most
"part excused by the violence of his love; so that
"they destroy not our pity or concernment for
"him: this answer may be applied to most of his
"objections of that kind.

"And Rollo committing many murders, when he
"is answerable but for one, is too severely arraigned
"by him; for, it adds to our horror and detestation
"of the criminal; and poetic justice is not ne-
"glected neither; for we stab him in our minds for
"every offence which he commits; and the point,
"which the poet is to gain on the audience, is not
"so much in the death of an offender as the raising
"an horror of his crimes.

"That the criminal should neither be wholly
"guilty, nor wholly innocent, but so participating
"of both as to move both pity and terror, is cer-
"tainly a good rule, but not perpetually to be ob-
"served; for, that were to make all tragedies too
"much alike; which objection he foresaw, but has
"not fully answered.

"To conclude, therefore; if the plays of the ancients
"are more correctly plotted, ours are more beauti-
"fully written. And, if we can raise passions as high
"on worse foundations, it shews our genius in tra-

"gedy is greater; for in all other parts of it the "English have manifestly excelled them."

THE original of the following letter is preserved in the Library at Lambeth, and was kindly imparted to the publick by the reverend Dr. Vyse.

Copy of an original Letter from John Dryden, Esq. to his sons in Italy, from a MS. in the Lambeth Library, marked N° 933. p. 56.

(Superscribed)

"Al illustrissimo Sig.
"Carlo Dryden Camariere
"d'Honore A.S.S.

"In Roma.

"Franca per Mantoua.

"Sept. the 3d, our style.

"Dear Sons,

"Being now at Sir William Bowyer's in the coun-"try, I cannot write at large, because I find myself "somewhat indisposed with a cold, and am thick of "hearing, rather worse than I was in town. I am "glad to find, by your letter of July 26th, your "style, that you are both in health; but wonder "you should think me so negligent as to forget to "give you an account of the ship in which your "parcel is to come. I have written to you two or "three letters concerning it, which I have sent by "safe hands, as I told you, and doubt not but you "have them before this can arrive to you. Being "out of town, I have forgotten the ship's name, "which your mother will enquire, and put it into her "letter, which is joined with mine. But the master's

"name

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"name I remember: he is called Mr. Ralph Thorp; "the ship is bound to Leghorn, consigned to Mr. "Peter and Mr. Thomas Ball, merchants. I am of "your opinion, that by Tonson's means almost all "our letters have miscarried for this last year. But, "however he has missed of his design in the Dedi-"cation, though he had prepared the book for it; "for, in every figure of Æneas he has caused him to "be drawn like King William, with a hooked nose. "After my return to town, I intend to alter a play "of Sir Robert Howard's, written long since, and "lately put into my hands; 'tis called *The Conquest "of China by the Tartars*. It will cost me six weeks "study, with the probable benefit of an hundred "pounds. In the mean time I am writing a song "for St. Cecilia's Feast, who, you know, is the pa-"troness of musick. This is troublesome, and no "way beneficial; but I could not deny the Stewards "of the Feast, who came in a body to me to desire "that kindness, one of them being Mr. Bridgeman, "whose parents are your mother's friends. I hope "to send you thirty guineas between Michaelmas "and Christmas, of which I will give you an ac-"count when I come to town. I remember the "counsel you give me in your letter; but dissem-"bling, though lawful in some cases, is not my ta-"lent; yet, for your sake, I will struggle with the "plain openness of my nature, and keep in my just "resentments against that degenerate order. In the "mean time, I flatter not myself with any manner "of hopes, but do my duty, and suffer for God's "sake; being assured, before hand, never to be re-"warded, though the times should alter. Towards

"the

"the latter end of this month, September, Charles "will begin to recover his perfect health, according "to his nativity, which, casting it myself, I am sure "is true, and all things hitherto have happened ac- "cordingly to the very time that I predicted them: "I hope at the same time to recover more health, ac- "cording to my age. Remember me to poor Harry, "whose prayers I earnestly desire. My Virgil suc- "ceeds in the world beyond its desert or my expec- "tation. You know the profits might have been "more; but neither my conscience nor my honour "would suffer me to take them: but I never can "repent of my constancy, since I am thoroughly per- "suaded of the justice of the cause for which I suf- "fer. It has pleased God to raise up many friends "to me amongst my enemies, though they who "ought to have been my friends are negligent of "me. I am called to dinner, and cannot go on with "this letter, which I desire you to excuse; and am

"Your most affectionate father,

"JOHN DRYD-

END OF THE NINTH VOLUME.

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